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J.H. Bufford - 1860

**THE**  
**ATKINSON MEMORIAL.**

**DISCOURSES**

**BY**

**THOMAS WILLIAM SILLOWAY.**

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**BOSTON:**  
**PUBLISHED BY JAMES M. USHER,**  
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**1861.**

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A. N. Hines, D.D.

**To the Society**

**IN WHOSE MEETING HOUSE**

**THESE DISCOURSES WERE DELIVERED;**

**TO MY FRIENDS AND THEIRS ;**

**INTO WHOSE HANDS THIS WORK MAY FALL,**

**IT IS**

**Affectionately Dedicated,**

**BY THE AUTHOR.**



## P R E F A C E .

---

On the 3d day of February, of the present year, the following letter was handed to me for consideration :—

ATKINSON, N. H., FEB. 3, 1861.

DEAR SIR :—The undersigned, Committee of the Atkinson Universalist Society, in behalf of the people of your charge, having listened with much profit to the many Sermons you have discoursed to this Society,—and believing that much good would result in the publication of the same, do most earnestly desire and request that you may arrange for publication such a number of Occasional and other discourses here preached, as you may deem best calculated to instruct and profit the rising generation, into whose hands they may providentially fall.

RICHARD GREENOUGH, }  
ALFRED B. LITTLE,     }  
ICHABOD D. KIMBALL, } COMMITTEE.

In obedience to the request made, as well as in response to many personal invitations, this work has been prepared for publication. Considerable latitude being given in regard to selection, such discourses have been taken as contain a common average of doctrinal as well as practical sentiment. Neither of them were written at a time when existing circumstances did not demand my attention for other work. They have been

passed to the press under circumstances scarcely more favorable; and are now presented with only a few verbal changes from the condition in which they were delivered.

Refraining from further apology or extended remarks, I now consign them to the interests of those for whom they are published.

The fourteenth discourse was prepared and preached at the request of an esteemed friend, and to him it is affectionately inscribed,

And now, in presenting the work to those at whose request it has been prepared, I do so with the prayer, that when the time shall come that I can no longer with living lips discourse of things pertaining to the kingdom, this little volume will do the work still, and thereby advance the time when righteousness shall cover the whole earth, and the will of God be done by all on earth, even as it is done in heaven.

THOMAS W. SILLOWAY.

BOSTON, APRIL 2, 1831.

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# **DISCOURSES.**





## DISCOURSE I.

---

### THOUGHTS FOR THE NEW YEAR.

REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD, CONSIDER THE YEARS OF MANY GENERATIONS ; ASK THY FATHER, AND HE WILL SHOW THEE ; THY ELDERS, AND THEY WILL TELL THEE.—*Deuteronomy xxxii. 7.*

WE now see through a glass darkly. We know only in part, and we prophesy but in part. There exist, however, other eyes than ours, and there are spirits other than those tabernacled in the flesh. This company is a multitude which no man can number. It is the heavenly host, the great army of the ensphered dead. With extended knowledge and intensified vision, they see, as we are seen, and know, even as we are known. Last Monday night, what a remarkable scene they beheld ! a caravan of things animate and inanimate passed from one division of history into another. The sun of our material heavens had gone its entire round. The gates of a new year were ajar, and ready to swing open, for the vast concourse to pass in. Beast, and bird, and insect, and fish, dormant or acting ; on the earth, or in the air ; in the ground or

in the sea. Millions of human beings, also, and conditioned the same; some as babes, asleep in their mother's arms, all unconscious; some as middle aged; some as men and women stricken in years; sick people and well ones; saints and sinners; wise and foolish; people of all colors, and classes and conditions—the whole, a vast procession were carried along, and now, the time in which they were has ceased to exist a new year is, and preparing for another, and millions of such like revolutions, and marches, and scenes, will in turn be. When I think of what was done then, how that the old earth, as if satisfied with her burthen, and desirous of repeating what she had done so many times before, completed her full complement of revolutions, and then went wheeling off again in her old orbit, as if refreshed by the consciousness of duty done, and anxious for another achievement, and a similar success,—when I think of this, and how that we, the acted upon, did not remember nor know what was being done, the most of us having gone to an earthly sleep in one year, and awakened in another, I think how befitting this time are the words of our text: “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations.” How much is comprehended by these words. Remember the days of old. We try to heed the injunction and are powerless. They are so many we cannot remember them. The beatified in glory may be able to comprehend and measure, but how can mortals? We go back to the day of Columbus, or that of Luther, and still back to those of the Master

himself, but all is as nothing. We go back to the time of the prophets, — we talk with Isaiah, and Amos, and others ; they look venerable, and their speech we can hardly understand. They tell us that they and their times are modern. They speak of Abraham and Moses. We go to them, and are informed of Noah, and of things early done, but are then only a step from where we started ; when we have been talked to by men who thousands of years ago went down to their graves ; when human lips no longer speak, then begins a discourse of the old earth herself. Mountains, myriads of years ago aged, but existing yet ; continents, which millions of years ago were the bed of the sea ; coral reef, and limestone range ; marble hills, and adamantine vallies ; Niagara, ancient, very old ages before a human eye had looked upon it. These all tell us of eternity, and that our lives, compared to theirs, is a vapor which early vanisheth away. Say they, remember the days of old. Think not you will ever be able while in the flesh sojourning to comprehend all. Consider the years of many generations. How that word *many* puts to flight inclinations to reflect. Three score and ten years is our allotted time. Three generations is about all any one can live, or by experience know. We may with propriety *consider* many, but till we are clothed upon with immortality more than that we may not hope or expect.

The first great suggestion I get from a consideration of our text is this. Since we know not of all, yet of much of the past, how foolish to disguise the possibility

of a similar future. Revolutions in nature may and probably will come. For aught any human being can know, the very spot where we now dwell, may in time be sea, and not land. High up in the mountains are shells and marine fossils, and there once rested the water of the sea. The entire economy may be changed, and nature convulsed anew. A kindred thought is, that God, who cares for the present dispensation will care for the new one as well. No revolution has been which he did not permit or ordain, and none will ever be. This earth on which we exist and which we love so well—on which we are so loath to die, and which we so dislike to leave—for which one will toil many years to obtain a little lot of, so that he may call it his own,—this fair earth of to-day was not always pleasant thus. One day, the entire mass was strained, and heaving from circumference to centre. Intense heat was fusing the rocks; the sea was vehemently laboring; fumes of sulphur, and great volumes of gaseous vapor were travelling through the vast realms of space; confusion was abroad, and a mighty work was being done,—but God was neither reached nor troubled.

“He sat serene upon the floods,  
Their fury to restrain;  
And he, as Sovereign, Lord and King,  
Forever more shall reign.”

He commanded the sea, and it was quiet. He said let there be light, and light was; he said let order come forth, and it came. The old earth rested; her heaving

lungs labored less, and soon verdure clothed the fields and hills ; animal life re-appeared, and so have things continued till now.

“ God reigns, events in order flow  
Man’s industry to guide.”

A second thought is, that great tribulations even should not make us doubt of good at last. We are often unnerved by little things. Sometimes a rainy day discomforts a small boy, who has anticipated a walk or ride. He can hardly wait for fair weather to come. We are all childish and impatient under ill. The child looks not beyond the time of tempest and storm. Older people, knowing more of life, can afford to wait. I think the case is similar with those of our friends who have before us gone into the spirit realm. They see us, and know that we are troubled by little things—little to them, but great to us. But even as the parent is not disturbed as the child is, by a rainy day, no more are they disturbed by the temporary perplexities that come to us. The father, knowing that soon the rain will cease, and the genial sun again gladden the earth, remembers that his boy will then, with a light heart and joyous spirit, go tripping and bounding over the fields and through the woods, forgetting that rainy days were. So is it with those who are beyond the influence of time and sense. They were once children of earth, and troubled as mortals; they are in a heavenly manhood now, and cannot well be troubled at our afflictions, for they know they are after all light, but

for a moment enduring and will work out for us, as theirs did for them, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I like this sentiment of our text. The young getting their lessons from the advanced, the experienced aged. I like this natural inclination of the human heart to reach up, rather than stoop down for the best things. We instinctively reach out, and up, not only with our intelligence, but with the better powers of our spirit also for an unattained good. Some how or other there is in all a wonderful charm about the future. Most people are entirely willing to run the risk of being informed of any ill conditions that may be theirs in the future, if they can only be informed as well of the coming good. Coming events cast shadows behind as well as before, so that the spirit gets glimpses thereof. If a person should at the close of a sun-shiny day stand on the easterly side of the great cathedral at Milan, he would see stretching out in front, and displayed over the ground, elegant shadows of pediments, and turrets, and buttresses, and strange plays of light, here and there like windows,—the whole thing a mystic cathedral. He would be entertained by the sight, and wonderingly turn around to discover the great reality itself. The vast temple would stand there, sublime and majestic, between him and the retiring sun. So, it seems to me, are many of the views we get of earthly things while we are mortal. The sun of God's impartial love shines brightly behind them, and casts shadows which we are entertained by, and seem to admire; but the

loves we entertain ; our best affections and thoughts ; our divinest moods on earth, are only shadows compared with the cathedral itself. I do not think our earthly experiences, compared to the heavenly, amount to as much. God, as the old catechism has it, made man with this chief end in view, to glorify Him, and enjoy Him forever. That fact is like a splendid sun, in behind, and back of all earthly things, and what we here have, and see, are only shadows. When we are permitted to look upon the realities of our heavenly condition, we shall see the cathedral and the sun itself. That light streams down to us now. We see it not fully, but we catch glimpses of it. The human soul instinctively looks forward to a future ; as a plummet near a hill swings towards it, inclined by the minerals there, so the human heart inclines toward the future and God. Sometimes out at sea, in a great storm, a ship staggers and wanders from wave to wave. In the binacle, near the stern of the vessel is the little beam of steel trembling, yet persistently pointing northward, no matter how the timbers are strained, or how the rigging sways ; disturb the needle ; veer it from its course as often, or as much as the unsteady march of the vessel may ; only leave it to itself, and true, as if conscious of duty, it goes back and all the time endeavors to be faithful, and rests only in the right. So of our spirits, they incline towards God. He is a God of the living, and the future say they ; disturb, distract it as you may ; let storms of affliction come ; try the spirit most, and most it leaves the

things of the past and the earth, and inclines towards the future and God. Property weans from God—adversity endears him to us. None are so bad, but let their danger and trouble be great, they will instinctively let alone the things of earth, and call upon him. The greatest sinner calls the loudest. This natural instinct of the human heart after the good and true—this desire to know—this reaching out, and on, after knowledge of God and what is to be, is a good and divine trait of human nature. We cannot expect to know all, while in the flesh, that we shall know by and by. We cannot expect to see the spiritual building—the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens—nor the sun that illumines, till by death we have been turned around, and prepared to behold their beauties. We can judge something of the future by the present and the past. I therefore see much value in our text, or rather the sentiment of it, which advises us to ask the aged. Ask thy Father, says the text, and he will show thee ; thy elders, and they will tell thee. You know it is fact, that God is called our Father in the New Testament, and the very first words of the Lord's Prayer recognizes the fact. We think a great deal more of the New Testament dispensation in consequence of this fact. The Old Testament never taught that act as proper. I suppose that in olden time but very few ever thought of calling God the Father. He was called Judge, Jehovah, and other austere, and majesty-inspiring names, but Father, he was not called. The words of the text inspire some-

thing of the New Testament idea—not as intense, but of a similar nature. Ask thy Father, it says ; ask thy Father and He will show thee. What child in want of knowledge can ask a kind parent for information, and information not be given ? A boy may be referred to the scholar for information ; he may get it and he may not. If he is poor, and meanly clad, and asks in a broken language, the chances are, he may be turned away ; but the poverty of the dear child—the trembling accents—the manner in which he comes, touches the heart of a father, and if the information can be given, the boy is sure to have it. There is a sublime beauty in that recommendation of our text. It is a great deal more like some of the words of the Saviour, than things that are generally found in the cold, law-statistical book of Deuteronomy. I early thought that a good name for the book. It carries with it in the hardness of pronunciation, a just correspondence to the statements it contains. The book is well enough of the kind ; the information contained is of value to help make up the lot we have, but the sentiments are not as valuable and soul-refreshing as some of the language of the New Testament ; take for instance the conversation of the Master, where he compares God's care and love to that of an earthly parent. When he spake of the lilies and the sparrows, and the numbering of the hairs of our head. This text of ours is quite unlike the general sentiment of the book of Deuteronomy, and more like the thoughts of Paul and John, and the later worthies. I should like

to elaborate this clause of the text, advising one to ask the aged for information. I say the aged, for the next clause is—thy elders, and they will tell thee. As much as though he had said, your father will inform you. Your elders are able to do for you what you cannot do for yourself. I should like to preach a whole sermon on this one point. The field is a very great one. The text is true, every word of it, but I cannot stop to elaborate now, for I must close soon, and can only add here, that there is a world of truth in the sentiment, that people of experience like to aid the inexperienced. People who will not give money or worldly goods are willing to give advice. He is a wretch, and of all who live detestable and mean, who will not give information to another who needs it. The great lesson I would ask you to learn and try to learn myself, is this : Be willing to hear others relate their experience and opinion before deciding yourself. Children need to be taught of those who, having lived longer, know better than they. The aged need to be taught by the good influences that come from a retrospective view of life, and all need to be taught of God. What a different world and life this would be if the injunction of our text was heeded. The young—they just coming into middle life—would be provident, because the aged say it is well to be prudent, and make a good use of the means they have. Thousands of things are wasted for every one that is properly used. They would be industrious, because experience says thrift and health and contentment come of honest labor. They would

be honest and upright, because it is really best to be so ; courteous, and making others happy ; these and many more good returns would come. If such be the life of the young men and women of a town or city ; if the children—good, because following the advice of parents—thus grow up, the people of mature years would be such as we picture to our minds when we think of a millenium, and give our thought the broadest range. Good old age to all would there be ; few pains, few aches, only a few regrets, and at last, when the candle of life flickered, and finally went out in its socket, it would be only the going out of a candle on earth, to be lighted again as soon, and afterwards be a star in heaven, shining brightly forever. A large per cent. of the mistakes mortals make is because they act directly opposite to what the experience of the elder part of the race say is best. There is not a sin committed that a person of experience and years would not, if consulted, speak against.

There is one thought more, and with that I close. Ask of those older than you are and they will assure you how fruitless has been their sorrow for things which were really dispensations of the providence of God, and which they could not hinder nor help. There is no better lesson we can learn from our meditation at the door of a new year than just this. When I began this discourse, I spoke of the march of things from the old year into the new. Many things, yea all, change in their passage. They are not the same at one point in their journey as at another. When a

ship is ready for sea, she has stowed away in the hold many large tanks of water for the sailor's drink. When first put in, the water is limped and good, but by and by it becomes thick and ropy, and is jelly-like for days, and can hardly be used at all. A change has been going on, and this is the result; but the change continues, and in a few days more, the water becomes clear and all right again, and for aught I know, will keep so forever. This is emblematic of the things we have and use. They do not continue as they are at first; at some stages of progress they are better, at others worse. In the end, all will be well. The old sailor would tell the cabin boy not to fear and mourn about his troubled drink, for all would work out well in the end. And so the fathers tell you and me. So say our elders of everything. Their friends died, and they thought themselves so grievously troubled at their departure, they should die immediately also. They and their friends were sick, and recovery seemed impossible. Trouble of many sorts, and of aggravated kinds, came; they thought they could not bear it, but must sink under the burden they carried. Dark times, perilous ones, were theirs; bewildered, perplexed, aggravated, perhaps in the world's cold judgment disgraced; left alone, or followed and troubled by the multitude. The elder part of any community will tell the younger part that they have experienced all this, and we know what they would say more. They lived through it all. As emergencies came, God fitted them for each. They came out of

the waters of affliction washed ; they emerged from the furnace purer gold ; and now, for aught they can know to the contrary, are better fitted to live or die than ever before. They will say, we could not help weeping ; our spirits would have broken but for that ; we did resist ; we did pray that the cup might pass, but it did not, and we drank of it. The tears shed was rain that fell from the clouds which lowered about us, and thus lightened they drifted away, and next, the sunshine of rest and reconciliation was ours. *This* is, of all the lessons of our text, the best. No evil as great as we think it to be. None endless. We, stronger than we think, God better and heaven nearer than we ever imagined them to be.

## DISCOURSE II.

---

### SUGGESTIONS OF SPRING.

THE WINTER IS PAST: THE RAIN IS OVER AND GONE ; THE FLOWERS APPEAR ON THE EARTH ; THE TIME OF THE SINGING OF BIRDS IS COME, AND THE VOICE OF THE TURTLE IS HEARD IN OUR LAND. — *Solomon's Song* ii. 11, 12.

The twenty-second book of the Old Testament, called Solomon's Song, is a very strange one, and when looked at from a particular point of view, seems to be anything but what so wise a man would naturally write. He was, however, a strange being, perhaps the most so of any of whom the Scriptures give account; hence, this book, which is a sort of nuptial dialogue, should not be discarded as spurious, simply on account of its oddity. Solomon was, at times, a saint, and at others, a sinner; he could write a good proverb, or utter a solemn prayer; he could think fast, and profusely, worldly thoughts, and then turning about, follow a new line of action, and write the book of Ecclesiastes. Being possessed of such a versatility of power, probably he spoke and acted unrestrainedly under the influence of particular passions; hence, some of his say-

ings give at least the look of falsehood to the others. The leading thoughts recorded in the book of Ecclesiastes are like light coming out of a purple glass lantern, making everything gloomy on which it falls ; but in this song, he makes out a case entirely different, and in his extacies utters hopeful and nice things. I think he did not consider everything vanity and vexation of spirit when he wrote about his love. He probably found it out to be what abused love always is, more fearfully empty than a bubble, and so dead as to be afflictively alive to torment ; yet he did not think so when he wrote or sung this nuptial song.

It is not improbable that the time of its utterance corresponded with this season of the year, for never did one better describe the presence of spring. The poet Thomson said many pleasant and significant things about each season, but Solomon, inflated and nerved by the passion of love, went that way and over the ground before, and Thomson, in speaking of spring, only gleaned what he had left. How well he told the whole of a large story, "The winter is past ; the rain is over and gone ;" fair weather was reigning, and nature was jubilant and gay. The flowers had appeared on the earth, or were just coming, for he says they appear. How like the incoming of light at the morning, his imagination wakes up as he continues, "the time of the singing of birds is come." He seems to be remembering the hours when rain was falling ; when there were no flowers in the fields, and when the birds were sleeping or away. His state of

mind and its action was very like the incoming of the king of day. When the rain had subsided, the little flowers ventured to peep up from the soil, and here and there, or now and then, a bird ventured to soar a little way and sing a few qualified notes, or a subdued song. That is like twilight of the early morning; but at a later hour, indistinct things, and misty ones, recede, and new glory and light comes in. So in spring, the birds increase in number, and intensify their song, 'till finally, when the great and glorious doors are thrown wide open, all the forces of nature are in full operation; things animate and inanimate are exultant, and the song of birds, and, as the text has it, the voice of the turtle, is heard in the land.

These analogies so prominent in ancient Scripture, are a divine beauty; and when on a day like this, we go abroad over nature, and see things everywhere like those considered in holy writ, we get more a conviction of their truth; both nature and the Scriptures all over, without and within, true, because natural, and appealing to our reason and experience and common sense. There are many lines of thought growing out of our text, either of which it would well repay us to follow. Let us, however, refrain from being very metaphysical in our consideration. Let us make a free observation, and read over, in a familiar way, the lesson of the season and hour. I will, as best I can, refrain from speculations, and talk of understandable and common things. First, then, let me suggest that all through life within, there must be, and there is, a corres-

pondence with nature without. There are seed times as well as harvests. A time to give, as well as one to receive. It generally appears to me, that the spring of the year is a time of nothing but expenditure ; paying out ; continually investing ; making ventures. Dame nature seems bent on taking risks, and making attempts at speculation ; she seems thus inclined during the months of spring. All her action has this object in view, and all tends that way ; vapors are arising out of the ground and going off somewhere ; odors from the soil and the flowers are exhaled, and pass along as a contribution of good. Music from the birds shoot like fairy rockets through the air ; the frogs and turtles, even all night long, scream and exult, as if desirous and anxious to furnish their full quota of noise and song. Even the grave old trees join in the carnival, and are bedecked in costly array ; old animals let loose from fold and barn, behave as if newly born, and skip, and roam, and play. The great heart of mother nature beats strong, and young, and quick, and the life blood flows freely to all parts of her system, now many millions of ages old. Doing some freakish, or pretty and nice thing, is for weeks all we can read of on the programme. Making investments enough in three months to last all the rest of the year. That is the great feature in the life of our New England spring, and is grandly emblematic of human life. In its spring, at youth time, there is generally little else but investment. It is mostly all outfit, preparation ; or seemingly, nothing in particular ; little income any-

where, or at any time. A too early return is looked upon, and very properly, as questionable. A matured youth dies early. Precocity and long life are incompatible and a contradiction of terms.

God meant that youth should be a time of expenditure or investment, and he fitted everything well for it. One of the greatest mistakes a parent ever makes, is when he is anxious to have his boy become a man too soon. The hard features of experience will come early enough, and it is cheating the child to make it an adult unnaturally soon. We sometimes force plants in hot-houses, to dispose of in the market early; this is well, but no one ever thinks of forcing those he would retain, or dispose of late in the autumn or winter. Early fruit decays easily and soon, so does a prematurely developed human being. Every thing is best, when matured in its own natural and unforced time. Each human being should have a full spring season to its earthly life. Summer will come in its own time, and the heat will be enough to bear when it comes. Children will be of age soon enough, and then they must, whether they are pleased or not, bear the burden of life's day. Give them each a spring, as well as a summer, and autumn and winter. God in his providences will bring along these latter; don't interfere with or intercept the good influences that will, if let alone, come in the former. Each aids, in its own way, in making existence a real life.

Let the child laugh, and, if it will, be frivolous, and blithe, and gay; there are lungs to be developed; and

made large enough for a great body to breathe with by and by ; let it roam and tumble and grow. Now is the time, by and by the brain will be working hard, and exhausting the fuel of physical life. If the foundation for a good, healthy and robust body is not laid, early depend upon it, chances are against ones existing at all. Prayers and sermons can never do as good physical service to a young child, as can exercise and play, and laughter, and proper food, and fresh air. Prayers and sermons will do their work, if administered judiciously at the proper time, but only at the proper one can they do it well or best ; so much then for the teachings of spring, to aid humanity in obtaining the means of a good physical life.

The second fact observable in nature to-day, and consequently our next lesson, is progress, and the imperceptibleness of the changes that come. When the rain is just over, in Spring, and the new flowers have come,—when birds are singing, everything is fresh and new ; but at the first of July, when summer has arrived, spring flowers have gone ; the freshness of nature is at a discount ; the highways are dusty and gardens overgrown with heavy plants ; and sultry noons, and still evenings, and tranquil mid-nights are observed ; birds are more quiet, and a general surrender of former things is at hand. The transition takes place imperceptibly, and when the change has been wrought, we say summer is here. This is the natural working and result of Nature's laws ; no forcing takes place, or is needed ; so it is again of

human life. The expenditure season being over, we quietly settle down, and are instinctively, and without a special effort, in course of preparation for the harvest. In our climate, with considerable propriety, we divide the year into four seasons, of about ninety days each ; there is in each of these, four others, as complete in themselves as the aggregate of which each is a sub-division. I will speak only of the spring, leaving you to apply the rule to the others, as you may have leisure, and think best. The first twenty days of our annual spring, are the spring season of it. I now reckon in the old style, which is eleven days later than ours, and for the climate, nearer right. This carries us to the first of April. In these early days, we see the first signs of Nature's returning life. The next twenty are the Spring's summer, for at the first of May, the new grass and flowers are come, and we get the first harvest ; the following twenty is the autumn or harvest time, when everything of a spring nature and history is fully developed, and we have, for the season, an abundant crop. The last twenty takes us to the first of June, and is really the winter of the spring, for in it dies all the especial and particular newness of life, that so marks and crowns, and even gives a name of action and life to this season of the year. Spring, as such, then dies, or ceases to be. The analogy holds good in the days of youth ; the four seasons are there ; the babe, in its mother's arms, is first ; next, the walking and talking child ; next after, the student ; and last, the youth grown

ready to merge into manhood, and ceasing to be a child, puts away childish things. This operation and general transition period of one's earthly life, answers well to the second point named, and is the gradual, but sure preparation for what is next to come. We study nature too little ; at all events, we do not make the operation of her laws enough a minister and preacher of good. I am not disposed to deify nature nor her laws, nor to make neither, or both, a substitute for revelation, but I would make good come of each, separated or united. There is no discord unless we, being out of tune, and attempting to chime in, blunderingly make a discord ourselves. Nature never yet asked a tree to bud and blossom, and bear its fruit in spring, and then be dried up and lifeless all summer ; neither does her laws or revelation ask you or me to be saints, and bear our richest and full harvests of good fruits all in a day ; nor to resist all the temptations and bear all the burdens of an entire life for days or years in advance. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. There are some people who, anticipating trouble, experiment for months before hand, trying to do a host of uncalled for things, just as a tree would do, should it make efforts to blossom and mature its fruit in a day. When apple and other tree blossoms are new, the air is damp, and this causes the sun to deal tenderly with them ; but when the fruit is maturing, the air is hot and dry, and fitted for that work as well ; and so it is in the life of you and me, the early part of it was for making good blossoms.

Lightness of heart, playfulness of nature, voidness of care, comes in early days ; the more substantial, the experience, the actual fruit-ripening time, comes later, and then, later yet, whether or not we will. At life's evening there come sobriety, meditation, and a general dislike of faster life. Each condition is proper and desirable in its own time, and best then ; but either is bad, and even worst, if it is put, or comes in the place of another. There is such a thing as the man being a boy too long, and also of the young or middle-aged man becoming an old one, matured and decrepid too soon. Some men are physically as old at forty as they should be at seventy. Indiscreet experiments in living, inordinate indulgences of thought and action, make them aged early. It is a well known fact, that the side of a tree least exposed to storms has more extended branches, and so it is of those who get their growth too much from wrong influences ; they are, like unequally exposed trees unsymmetrical ; like begets like, the world over. The true theory of choosing companions and general society consists of two parts : for the development of all that is physical, aid comes from those who are younger ; for the expansion of the intellect, and things pertaining to that, only the experience of older people is reliable. The extremes in either case, however, are to be avoided. Every person should have some companions, and access to some society, of both older and younger persons than itself. Both are of service to each other. I pity the middle-aged or aged person who has so cultivated himself, that

he naturally ignores and despises, or is not able to appreciate and be at home in the society of the young. I say of such, they will lack and need the fire of youth, and without it, will be cold and aged indeed. If they cannot obtain it otherwise, they do well to borrow. If they would remain in feelings young, they must be with and imbibe somewhat of the spirit of youth from youth ; and they can get it no where better in quality, or cheaper, than directly from those who manufacture it. I pity also the young person who has no taste for, or ability to enjoy, and feel at home in the company of venerable age. They will be boyish in the extreme ; and books nor teachers can make them wise. The good influence of age,—the ripe, rich experience of years,—that is to the young spirit, heated and frivolous, treasures which money will not buy. God has made us all from birth till death,—and thanks to Him, ever after,—beings of society ; He meant to have us live together, and enjoy, each helping the other. Neither can live best, entirely alone. So true is it that one begets the ways and habits, and even physical conditions of another, that we need to be on our guard, lest an undue influence be exerted. Still, while in proper exercise, each is of service to the one whose counterpart he or she is. Do not think me getting away from my text ; I am not ; enough was said at the start, in relation to the letter of the thing. I am speaking now of the Spirit. What has been said are deductions from the text, and they are natural and legitimate. The almanac can tell as well, or better,

about spring time and its accompaniments in the natural world, than our text or any part of the Bible. Thomson said things concerning it as good as did Solomon, and if we stop at either or all written words, we do ill, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. We ought at this, the spring-time of the year, as well as at any or all particular and marked seasons, to listen to these voices which nature is uttering with so much eloquence in our ears. We should look through nature and see God. We do well when we walk abroad in the coming month and remembering that the winter is past, and storms over, reflect also that so will it be with us, who now dwell tabernacled below. Winters come in the world without, and our splendid seasons of spring and summer and autumn end ; and so comes seasons in human life. We go up from infancy to youth and manhood, and on to age ; we blossom and bear fruit, and seem to have an abundance of grain laid up in store ; but the winter of misfortune comes, and the hard frosts of trouble destroy our rest. But this is not all ; even as the storms which wrestle with the oak make it large and strong, and more a tree, so do these changes in life develop and fit us for that glorious land,

“ Where everlasting spring abides,  
And never withering flowers.”

Oh how eloquently nature is preaching to-day ; talk not of words which preachers, orators, mortal men may pronounce ; talk not of psalm or prayer, they have uttered or written ; the most ornate discourse is unfinished, and comparatively unmeaning are they all.

No sound from organ or viol in church gallery was ever yet sweeter than the notes of the birds who sang this morning to welcome the rising sun. How more than blest is that soul, who, with a spiritual ear, nicely adjusted and tuned to divine harmony, enjoys a continual Sabbath. That soul which, when going abroad in open nature to-day, will, as by instinct, without effort or knowledge, mingle itself with the harmony in which it dwells, and experience a foretaste of that condition which will belong to it soon.

And now, in closing, let me induce you to pray to be able to interpret nature aright; to hear more when you hear the birds sing, than simply a sound issuing from their little throats, to see more when you look at the new flowers that now are, or will come, than merely an organization of matter that will in a few days die. Do not lose this season and wait for another. "Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." When I think of the imperfection of my thoughts and words, how that you are thus far only moved, and not prepared to act as I would have you, and more, that let you do as best you can, a million times more good will be yet unattained; I feel like preaching long, and am loth to forbear; but alas, for me, good intentions are as nothing. God alone can do the work, and I close with a prayer that, where left by me, he will take it up, and educating and strengthening, send rich benedictions of love and intelligence of Him and heaven to each of our spirits, now and evermore.

## DISCOURSE III.

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### THOUGHTS ON SUMMER.

THE HAY APPEARETH, AND THE TENDER GRASS SHOWETH ITSELF, AND HERBS OF THE MOUNTAINS ARE GATHERED.—*Proverbs* xxvii. 25.

Now is the season for gathering in the first installment of what we hope and expect will be a generous harvest, and, like the dead of winter, is a marked period in the year's history. I select our text because it applies so well to the occasion and hour. It is a simple and unostentatious statement of things done at least five or six thousand years ago, and re-done every year since, by just such beings as we are, and on the same earth where we labor and dwell. It is no compend of ethics or philosophy, neither is it a call to particular duty. If it awakens any special meditation or thought, it is, that God's work is true, and his action right, without variableness or shadow of turning. It says familiar things; although more than thirty hundred years are gone since it was uttered, it is as fresh and new as if the Cultivator, or the New England Farmer, had said it for the first time in its last week's issue. I like well to think over these common things. When I

look out upon a field, and see sturdy men, and sometimes women, laboring in a bronzing sun, I am glad to remember that their lot is not an exception, but that the good God and Father of us all makes the thing uniform and labor honorable the world over. In some one of the many ways, we must toil. I, during the week, gather some thoughts wherewithal to entertain you, and as best I am able, assist in respecting and using well the Sundays, so that you may be better and do better for the six days that come between. You cure and gather in the hay,—food for horses and cattle, which in turn are to help us sustain physical life, while we are enlarging and enjoying that which is spiritual. I like well to think over these things. How like ourselves, and our times, were those which existed so long ago. How natural and life-like are the words when they tell their story. “The hay appeareth !” Once it was grass—a production fresh from the hand of God—perfect, and fashioned directly by Him. Now it is hay, and, humanly speaking, the work of man. It appeareth ; not coming all at once, as by magic transmuted, but produced by an invisibly slow process, resolving itself from one condition into another,—a part grass, a part hay—with millions of nice gradations between — and thus, like the incoming of the morning, it “appeareth.” How unchangeable are nature’s laws ; none need amending, nor has one been repealed. Perfect at first, all are good, and work as well now as then. In the fields of this town to-day, is being repeated a thing done first only a few months after the stars and now ancient earth

were made ; for the text continues : “ The tender grass showeth itself.” Only a few weeks will pass before fresh evidences of the Father’s love will come out of the solemn soil, and all will look green again, as it did last May or June. What a wonderful book nature is. Even a sober grass field being a page set up in large type, with condensed thought and pure diction. Let us stop by the way and read just one page of the large volume.

“ In the spring, after enduring the rigors of a hard winter, my surface was barren as though vegetable life had ceased to exist ; conditioned thus, work was begun. In a little time, a nice green robe covered my nakedness, and then went up jubulations and anthems of praise. The garment increased, till it became a load of glory ; but in the midst of my honors, at high twelve, there came stalwart framed men, and their trenchant scythes in a single day took off most of what made the glory. No murmuring came—no moment was wasted in repinings ; but before the men went home, a new work was begun ;—while they slept, and when some of them had died, every element was in successful operation, and a repairing of the injury went on. There was a complete triumph over the disaster,—new grass showed itself, and everything was right, and good as before. Man may despoil my glory again ; and after that, I shall rest, for it will be my right ; and as a tired child avails itself of sleep, so shall I, in the late autumn, begin my repose ; and then, all winter long, will I rest, till the morning of spring comes, to wake me into new being

and life ; and no storm, nor wind, nor earthquake even, can disturb my rest, nor too soon end my repose."

What a lesson this, and how ignorant we are, if we have not learned it. When shorn of property and friends, how better to do as does good old nature ;—rather than give up to mourning, and be disheartened for what we lose, better be glad that we had so good a thing once, and glad also, that we are permitted to work again, and obtain other in its stead. The grass is tender when it first appears ; the old is hard and worn. It is much the same with the things we accumulate, and for which we mourn the departure when they go. They all get "worse for wear" and cease to be tender. It is only a few out of the lot that we call better for age,—wine and violins improve in people's estimation by age and keeping—so do some friends and opinions ; but there are more things that are considered as not improved, than there is that are. Good old psalm-tunes, in time, get to be despised ; the Easter Anthem, and the Ode on Science, and Windham, come to be the butt-end of ridicule, and with their kindred are marshalled out on a public platform, like so many members of an "Antique and Horrible Company," for the provoking of mirth, to a flattered, though in some respects, less worthy generation. Houses and clothes get out of fashion. Piano fortes are bought with money earned by grandmothers at spinning wheels, and laid up against a rainy day ;—and a spinning wheel itself is as great a curiosity to the piano forte player, as a Chickering piano forte with large legs would have been to a spinning

wheel turner, at a time when not even small legs were provided for tables, but where three feet alone were given, and the whole made to stand aslant a corner ;—and so things change. The old ones, like grass ready to be cut, have a hard look. The new only look inviting and tender. All this is true of things material. But that is not all ; human beings,—we ourselves,—would soon be out of date if we did not keep our eyes open, and our whole selves acting all the time. We need to be on the watch. The word is : “keep up with the times, or young America will distance you in the race.” New things and thoughts, or else novel and fresh recurrence to the best of the old ones, are all that keep us tender, and prevent our being cut down,—for we are like grass in more senses than one. The wise man of Israel said, men are like grass when they die. If he were among mortals now, he would probably believe they are like it when they live also.

An important suggestion of our text as a whole, is, that the small and common things of life are capable of teaching as important lessons as the large ones. It is well that there are sermons in stones, and lessons of wisdom in the running brooks.

Very unfortunate should we be, if only human lips could be our preachers, and the human brain generate instruction. Addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division, are all the elements involved in calculations. “Geometry is the foundation of architecture, and the root of mathematics.” Twenty-six letters are the whole of the alphabet,—out of them any word

may be formed. The student carries these with him from place to place, and they are all he needs for the solution of his problems. Their comprehensiveness and completeness is their glory. The golden rule of doing as one would be done by, comprehends all of Christian theory and duty. This makes religion a portable thing, and it is just what the world needs. We want something we can take with us wherever we go,—never considering that we have not room for it, and hence leave it behind. In these days of railroads, and steamboats, and telegraphs, people often travel without even one trunk ; a valise, or a carpet bag, will contain things enough. They go to a sea-shore to remain a month, and will there live crowded in two rooms,—whole families packed together like Southern slaves. The tendency of the age is to be willing, if need be, to move in a small compass. Small doses of medicine are given where once great potations and big doses terrified the diseased. A homeopathist's pocket case is considered to contain as much element of cure as a whole shop full of drugs were a half century ago. At a time like this, we want a portable religion also ; one we can take with us, and have at command all the time. Great and heavy creeds,—dry dissertations on predestination, sanctification, justification, and damnation, are out of date, and he who loads himself with them must carry additional trunks, and pay extra for his passage. Love to God and love to man, which is an indwelling piety, is the all in all,—and these we can, if we will, carry with us any where, and have in our heart and head, or

their results, about us all the time. I spoke of the boy's rudimentary elements of education. He need not carry with him the books, if he only remembers the rules themselves ; his brain is a book containing all the information he can need or use. So of Christian labor. If we have the elementary principles with us, all nature will aid in interpreting and rendering itself aright. When the farmer gathers in his harvest, he can think of God. He can follow on, step by step, and in silent worship do a nobler service than was ever done in temple or cathedral. Sweeter songs have been sung by the contented spirit, as it has followed a plow, than ever went up from the Sistine Chapel at Rome. Time and place are nothing. The frame of mind is all. Agriculture was among the earliest work done by man, and is full of suggestions. It involves the grandest principles of chemistry,—the most extended of sciences, and is the noblest work ever performed by a mortal ; for it shows him, in a way the mechanic arts can never do, how little are we, and how great is God ; and it opens to our view a vast panorama of his infinite power and might.

Things made by God, are possessed of mighty possibilities,—those made by men perish by the using. The element in a single seed of mustard is susceptible of infinite progression. So is that in a human thought. Intelligence is God's light, with which he lighteth every man that cometh into the world. The germ of a thought, and that of a seed, are alike unseen,—being in essence eternal. The discovered is the temporal. A

## SUMMER.

plow, or the best thing a man can make, has no soul, nor innate principle of life ; while a seed of mignonette, or the smallest that the Almighty has made, is a conservatory of immortality. The farmer deals often with these, and he handles, most of all men, the mighty things of God. It was a favorite theme of discourse for the Master — this subject of seeds, and husbandry ; of harvesting and gathering into barns. He thought some, and talked some of fishing, and fowling,—but tilling the ground,—the common mother of us all,—had his attention most, and was frequently the vehicle to convey choice instruction and thought. I seldom think of Him, and his mission, without thinking also of the harvest at the end of time, when sin will be finished, and joy and gladness fill the whole earth. All chaff destroyed, and the wheat garnered. The “sinner himself saved, yet so as by fire, but his sins destroyed.” Information of that harvest never stirred the breast of him who wrote our text. The fact that a little perishable hay had appeared,—some tender grass showed itself,—and a handful of mountain herbs been gathered, was a source of pleasant contemplation. His kindred and friends went to a bourne whence not one returned. He was to go soon, and, as he thought, worse than a cut down tree, cease to exist, yet he was thankful for the good he had, and for what the earth produced, nothing in despair for the diviner and sacred human treasures she held. We have annual harvests of hay, and tender grass, and mountain herbs, as had he ;—we have a like intelligence to discern them, and hearts sus-

ceptible to gratitude, and therefore akin to his ; nothing of advantage over us had he, any where or any how,—but we have next to infinite advantage over him, and ought to rejoice next to infinitely more than did, or could he.

No swing of a scythe should fail to remind us of the work that is being performed by grey-bearded Time ; no field of grass ought to be looked upon, or walked into, or over, without the countless number of its blades reminding us of the infinity of years of which eternity is composed. Never need we look at the new and tender grass without being re-informed of that newness of life, and vigor of soul, which is forever to be ours after we have crossed the river, and are safely landed in the courts of heaven. The herbs on mountain or plain ; the medicine for man or beast, should ever and anew make us think of the great Physician,—that heaven is Gilead, and that he, with ourselves, are forever to rest and be at home there ; and, finally, each night when we lie down, and each morning when we arise,—every time we put into our mouths a thing that came through nature to us,—we ought to take it as a special favor from the generous hand of a liberal God.

The Psalmist did well when he cried out : “ The Lord is good, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth to all generations.” I think of him, earnestly as he breaks out in divine ejaculations, and beseeches his fellow mortals to give God the glory, when he says “ Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men ;” some-

times he seems to be full of heavenly consciousness of the immensity of God's goodness and love, so that the thought is too big for utterance, he taxes his power to the uttermost, and at last, doing his best, can only say, "From the rising of the sun, even to the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised." He writes many a psalm more, and finally closes with one grand and comprehensive finis: "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

I must close now. Like your harvesting, my labors, as all our earthly labors in time end. I render you a good service, when, as a friend speaking to another, I ask you to make much of time, and these good examples which nature every day, in every field, and flower, and blade of grass, sets for imitation. Think how the world looks to justice and right for help. How little they now think of God, as confidently thought the psalmist. How they doubt, and are troubled. "Say not ye, there are yet four months and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." The world needs your help now.

I sometimes think if good old Simeon, and Isaiah, or Abraham could come and look at the fields of Christ's kingdom now,—that joy intensified into pain, would stir them; and that, exercised at the view, they would even die of rapture, and their spirits quickly melt away again to the realms of the blessed.

What rapture ought to be ours. What fear to sin, lest we hinder somewhat the grand procession, as it

marches up to the gate of the celestial city. What confidence in complete triumph should elate us ; what measureless tranquility is within our reach, and how well we may say, God hath dealt with us, as he hath not dealt with any people.

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## DISCOURSE IV.

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### LESSONS OF AUTUMN.

**THE GRASS WITHERETH, THE FLOWER FADETH: BUT THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOREVER.—Isaiah xl. 8.**

It was doubtless at a season of the year like the present, that the prophet pronounced the words of our text. He seems to be remembering the precision with which the seasons march, and had been marching for ages, and perhaps he thought still further that they would thus proceed to the end of time. From the first autumn that ever was, till then, the grass had annually withered, the flowers had faded, and man himself been going to his long rest and home. I can now easily picture to myself the prophet, sitting beneath some aged tree, on one of the mellow days of autumn, when the air was tinctured with odor of things dying,—the sun's light yellow, the grass dried, withered leaves falling thickly about him; the flowers—some dying, and some dead,—their stalks bending to the earth and tangled; the order and finish that was a few months ago charac-

teristic of the garden and field spoiled, and everything like system gone. I see him look over the scene, and as a new troop of dry leaves travel through the air, he arises to go home, and says : “ Beauty fades,—the grass withers,—the busy generations of men go like them ;—nothing of earthly fixed,—all obey the laws of mutation and change: but the word of our God abideth forever.” I see the prophet as he is, and thinks thus ; and now, when, on a day like this, I go out into the same nature, and see the same things : withering grass, and fading flowers,—dying mortals—emblematic of whom the grass and the flowers are—I think anew of the fact that the word of our God abideth forever. When the present order of things began, it was said : there shall be seed-time and harvest—summer and winter—day and night : all these have been. The word of our God has endured, and all is as true to-day as when the words were uttered first : and so will they be true till the earth and heavens be no more,—and when these shall have passed away—after no vestige of them remains—God will still live ; his care for all things remaining will be as sure and undeviating as now.

Autumn is to some constitutions a season of melancholy thought ; and the withering grass, and fading flowers, seem to contribute largely to this result. I presume the prophet felt thus at first, for he had sympathetic and fine strings in his heart,—as fine and sympathetic as those in either of us ; but nothing he saw, or heard, could make him melancholy long ; when he had thought of the decay visible in the world without

he thought of the entire 'durability of that within, and he then thought on, step by step, as a child just learning to walk goes from thing to thing, and when he arrived at the Author of all being and life he rested. I think he was confident that the enduring word of God was good and desirable, and that he obtained consolation from the thought. He would have had nature continue lovely ; the grass always growing ; the flowers unfading, and things earthly more permanent than they were.

The prophet was a mortal like one of us ; but when he knew that such things as he would have, he could not, doubtless he said, "well, pass away, as you must; my God's word will stand forever ; and on that, and Him will I rely." I presume he had in spirit spoken these same words of our text many times before, and he must have thought them over again, after that, every autumn till he died. And if he died in the autumn, when the grass was withering, and the flowers were fading, how he must have been thankful to be permitted to go then, at the time of universal death,—and passing away thus, go home rejoicingly to God. I sometimes think the fall of the year is the time of all others to die. The spring of the year appears to be just the time to live ; but when nature is disrobing herself, and getting ready for repose ; when the birds have gone away, and the little animals are just retired, and have begun their sleep ; when the streams are being covered over and sealed up ; the sun, as if tired and weary, arising from his bed later in the morning, and going back to it earlier at night, looking jaundiced and

sleepy all day ; in a word, when everything begins to move sluggishly, and the great world of animation is curtailing its action, then is a befitting time for a mortal to die. And when in some old burial ground, I read on the grave-stones of the babe, or youth, or maiden, or one middle-aged, or the venerable sire or matron, who went down to their grave in golden October, or the days near it at either end, I think of the words of the prophet ; and think also of the grass that had withered, and the flowers which had faded, and the child of mortality that day made immortal, and I seldom fail to get the impression that it was well to die then.

There is nothing of absolute melancholy in autumn, if we do not stop at the thought of death. We must not linger there ; but let the spirit's aspirations move up and on, and all will end well. I know not what better thought the prophet could have added to the first he had, than the one he did. Neither you nor I could have done better, if we could have done as well. With one breath he said a thing which inspires the world to-day. The word of our God shall stand forever, says the text. After it had been pronounced and put upon the record, and had been there a thousand years, the apostle Peter read it ; and at the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of the first chapter of his first book he says : " All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away : but the word of the Lord endureth forever ; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

Peter said that eighteen hundred years ago, and now we read it and remember, because we see evidences of the fact, that all is true. Yes, all ; for just as surely as when we go out into nature to-day and see withering grass and fading flowers, just so sure are we that God's word is still abiding, and, for aught we can or do know to the contrary, will abide forever. St. Peter says to the people of his time : this, by the gospel, is preached unto you. And no less is it by the gospel preached to us. The word *Gospel* means glad tidings. It signifies no more, nor no less ; and good tidings, indeed, it is to know that God is unchangeable—his word abiding—and will continue as it now is forever.

Taking the old doctrine of the Trinity—that God and Christ are identical : equal and only one—then Christ is alike unchangeable ; and so is the Holy Ghost. Such being the case we need fear no danger. I have often thought that an unfortunate result of trinitarian argument, which makes God out to be like his son, or, rather to be his son himself. I mean unfortunate for the trinitarian theory. For, as Christ was always loving, and kind, and pitying in the extreme,—even the very embodiment of forgiveness itself,—then, if he be like his Father, and his Father like him, neither will trouble a poor human being forever, if they do it at all. I think one of the most ludicrous positions or attitudes old fashioned Calvinism ever gets into, is that one where it tries to make out that God and Christ are identical—the same being,—and then, in a moment,—just as an engineer reverses the valves in a steam engine,—turns the

thing about, and represents God as hating his children with all his might, and his Son as loving them so devotedly that he dies a victim to his own love. Love and hatred contending with each other. Love getting defeated, and the conflict going on, in one and the same being. I hate Calvinism for that story. I hate the tactics of the battle ; and I by no means like the thought that hatred got the better of the case ; so that nothing short of the death of one part of God's nature satisfied the demands of another.

None of this is true. God is supreme ; His nature is not divided. He speaks and it is done ; He commands and things stand fast. The grass may wither,—the flowers may fade ; the stars may fall from their orbits, and the old earth run out of her sphere ; but His word will endure forever.

This was the kind of God, thought of and believed in by the prophet. It was the one loved by Peter, and John, and Paul. It was the one declared in the gospel ; and it is the only one worthy of confidence and trust now.

After reading the grand old words and promises made to Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, that in them should all nations, and families, and kindreds of the earth be blessed ; and further, that no more than the rain can go back to the skies without watering the earth, and making it to bud, and bring forth, and increase. No more than that can or will the word of God return to him void, without prospering in the thing, and accomplishing the work, whereto he sent it.

Then I am rejoiced to read our text, and can say I am glad that his word is thus enduring, and will continue forever. That is just the kind of God whose word I would have abiding and continual. Were another God on the throne ;—sat there one such as I once had taught me there was, I would hail with pleasure that other story, that he was one vacillating and changeable, —hating one day, but loving another. A changeable God like that, is better than the Calvinistic one,—hating some and loving others all the time. Both are bad enough. None but he whose very nature, as John said, is love, can I respect or adore ; with such a God as my Father, and the Father of my relatives and companions and friends, I can feel confident, and on his everlasting arm, or in his all-loving and sheltering bosom rest.

The papers of the week speak of a lack of food in some portions of the States ; other ones tell of conflagrations, and of disasters at sea. So common are these occurrences, and so familiar are they, that people at large call the newspapers dry and dull,—few news in it worth hearing, if there is not a full quota of such things as I name ; and then another class still, like to read about prize-fights, and horse-races ; and some others, about suicides and murders, and things as bad. The world has many enactments like these. The great public mind expects such, and calls the newspaper well edited that contains a large lot of the news of the day. The newspapers of our time are in the world of intelligence, what the book of nature is in that of matter.

Both are records of change and mutation,—of some things coming into existence, and of others going out of it. Each, and both, tell their story well;—an absence of fixedness any where, or at any time. Mutability, that—and that alone—is the very bone and marrow,—the burden of the story they tell; but how blessed the work done by revelation, and an intelligent Christian meditation on God, and his children, and heaven. The intelligent Christian says, “Let my property take wings of fire and fly, or on the bosom of the flood drift away; burn my house, my all; sink my ships, or flood my lands; let the grass wither, and the flowers of my garden of hope fade away; the word of my God will stand unharmed, and will so remain forever.” And he says again, “My child, or my father or mother; my brother or sister; my companion or friend, whose bodily form has bent, and broke, and faded, did not die, but to Him went home, and now peacefully rests. ‘All souls,’ he says, ‘are mine.’ He careth for them,—he has so said; and his word knoweth no change.” And how can a spirit, plumed and soaring thus, rest there? What one ever did? He continues: “His word relates to me also. He is my unchanging and ever loving God; and when I am like the grass, and the flowers, smitten by the autumnal frost of death, and like a sere and yellow leaf, fall from the tree of life; then I shall, like the trees again, and soon, put on a new garment of glory, and shall ever after be thus robed; for this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality; and I dwell with spirits made perfect, time without end.

The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; his truth endureth to all generations, and his word standeth forever."

But some one will say: "God is just; His words in condemnation of sin are true also." Yes,—thanks to His name,—he does hate sin, and in good time will end it. He will by no means clear the guilty,—his mouth has spoken that also; and I am troubled when I hear a minister preach that he will not render to every man a just and an equal remuneration for each and all his sins. That man speaketh not as the oracles of God, who argues that one may sin with a high hand for many a year, and by some act of repentance annihilate and blot out all at once and forever. No! rather than a God unjust like that, He is one who will render to all a just recompence of reward. With Him there is no respect of persons; whoso doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong he doeth.

Repentance never makes a man a saint, and rid of the influence of past sin, and all inclination to sin again, more than does the regret and repentance of a goutish glutton make him at once healthy and well. Let one spoil his digestive organs by overt acts of eating or drinking; nature rebels, and insulted mocks, when he desires and seeks rest.

Let one live a course of sin for years; a sinner he is, and the chances are, that so long as he lives, a sinner he will be, let him repent, as sincerely as he may. He has been tempted and has yielded a thousand times. He has made for himself a second nature of sin; he can

easily reside with that: and if, after conversion, he lives a sober and godly life, it is done by eternal vigilance, and earnest labor—hard and tiring,—ever continued watchfulness and prayer. The new career of an old sinner is no easy one. The reformed drunkard fights every day greater battles than Alexander or Nero, or any soldier ever fought. He that ruleth his own spirit, is greater than he that taketh a city. He who, once covetous, and loving money better than humanity or God, resolves to sell some if not all of his goods, and give the money to the suffering poor, must struggle; he has a work to do; but blessed be the authors of all charity and good, he is rewarded for his labors, and the brow of his spirit is wreathed well, and early; he is remunerated a thousand fold. God is just. His word in this, as in all things else, endures; but justice is tinctured with and permeated by mercy, and nothing ever was or ever will be done which will not in the end work out an infinite and everlasting good. “The mercy of the Lord,” says the psalmist, “endureth forever.” So long as he is just;—yea, so long as he exists, he will be merciful to the children of men. That is a bad doctrine which says mercy will one day end, and God’s compassion cease. I know that to be angry without a cause is to sin; but I am always glad when I think that there is such a thing as one’s being angry and sinning not. There is propriety in exercising a righteous indignation, when one hears another assert, and present as Bible,—to say nothing of Gospel truth,—the story that God, though just and merciful now, will one day be fiendish and un-

merciful ; and so his justice demand, and be satisfied with the endless trouble and sorrow of one he created, and constituted, it may be, with strong passions and tendencies, and inclinations, and facilities for sin. There is no justice in a God like that. And they who clamor loudly for the attribute of justice in God, make him unjust in the extreme.

That only is the just God, who does actually punish sin. That only is the merciful one, who tempers his justice with mercy. A God all justice would only torment ; and one all mercy would never torment at all. Now, since we know that God does both of these, and never neither alone, we know a harmony reigns over and in all. This is the only rational and good, and for humanity, proper view of God. God's word, in all respects, is true, and forever will be.

Where is the justice in endlessly tormenting one of his children ? Is endless, interminable woe, just as a recompense for the sins of a few years ? The boy and the aged sire, both to be troubled as long and alike ? *Is that justice ?* Or the old sinner,—never till a week before he dies repenting,—is mercy to operate alone ; and all his life time struggle, and only be successful at last ? That God is not the one who reigns over nature, and by the constant supervision of his own created machinery and laws governs all, as well as you and me, and the race of man.

When the sun goes off in his orbit thousands of miles and in particular attitudes and relations to the earth, produces, or does not interfere with the incoming of

cold ; then frost comes and insinuates itself into the life blood of the grass, and it withers ; and the flowers, and they fade ; it runs through the arteries and tubes of the trees ; the leaves blush, and bronze, and fall ; and by and by intensified, it creeps over the glass of our windows, and—as if to mock and tantalize us, and too often remind of glory departed, and the grass withered, and the flowers faded, and things dead,—imprints them on the glass ; just so unerring are God's laws in things spiritual also. A law in operation always works out its own result,—no matter whether we mortals are entertained and enjoy the action or not. Sunshine, and nice new dew, and genial rains, and balmy air, make nature appear fresh, and blithe, and gay. Cold winds, and ice, and snow, make the opposite,—and death comes. So it is in the realm of our spiritual being and life. When the sunshine of righteous actions streams along our path, next showers of good deeds come ; and the dew of truth, and the balmy air of divine grace being about us, we are in heaven. But when the storms of dissipation, and the ice of sin and wrong ; when the frosts of wicked intentions come and blight our resolutions, then is the winter of our discontent ; and remembrances of opportunities abused and neglected ;—of joys that were once ours, are all photographed on the spirit's vision, and like the frost pictures on the window glass, make us think of things that were.

The gambler at times thinks of other things than his lost money ; he remembers and sees things of his early

home. All who live and sin, look back, and in the seclusion of their own being and home, repent and regret

God's laws are unswerving. His word will stand forever. He is no mistaken one ; nor is he anything but a being of justice, and mercy, and love. He is my Father, and yours, and the world's ; no less a Father than Ruler, and God. Have your fill of trust and confidence in Him, to whom be glory now and forever.

## DISCOURSE V.

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### TEACHINGS OF WINTER.

WILL A MAN LEAVE THE SNOW OF LEBANON, WHICH COMETH FROM THE ROCK OF THE FIELD? OR SHALL THE COLD FLOWING WATERS THAT COME FROM ANOTHER PLACE BE FORSAKEN—*Jeremiah* xviii. 14.

THERE are many things suggested by our text for which we should feel glad, and be thankful to-day. We should be glad, first, that the prophet Jeremiah was a human being, and that he could and did say things readily understood by us mortals. The commonness of his illustrations is sublime. I like this characteristic of the Old Testament Scriptures. When the love of the Father is spoken of as impartial, and is said to find an emblem of itself in the rain, which descends alike on the evil and on the good, I know just what is meant. Rain, three thousand years ago, was the same in element and operation that it is to-day. It has always fallen on the just and on the unjust, and whenever it falls it will

always do the like ; and so the writer of old did well, when he illustrated God's love by that ; and the church, or an individual, does ill when it says otherwise. It is said by some, that God loves the saint, but hates the sinner. No more is that true, than is it true that he sends rain and sunshine on one and not on the other. God loves truth and right, and he hates sin and wrong ; but the sinner himself he hates never.

When one of old speaks of the "dews of divine grace," I know pretty well what he means. I think of dew in the natural world on a summer's morning. How pure and silvery it is, standing in globules,—the most symmetrical form in all nature,—on the ends of grass blades, and along the borders of leaves of the lily and rose. I think, while looking at it, how noiselessly it came down from the material heavens last night, while humanity was sleeping. Not coming with a measured tread like the rain, but as with wings, fairy-like, through the air, moving as really as the planets in their spheres, but as noiseless as silence itself. I enjoy the thought and idea, that divine grace is distilled like the dew, and finds a fit emblem in a thing so pure and good. Divine grace is too nice a thing to come in storms, and amid tempests and winds. It comes at the stillest of all times,—and most and best only then. We never get dew in the stormy days or nights, but when nature is seemingly reposing, is the hour for the dew to distil. And so it is of grace from on high, when passions are stirred, and storms of excitement sweep over the main of human life, no dew falls. Some people think that

times of excitement do them most good, and that they get large quantities of grace then.

It is not like the nicely distilled dew, but is rather like the rough rain, which may be water only a few hours ago in the sea, and hurled up from its bed to fall as quickly. The inspired one did well, when he illustrated the passage of divine influence to the human breast by the dew, and so might be named many an other thing common, but nevertheless wonderfully replete with significance, and pregnant with thought. I pass all, and say a few words concerning our text.

Each element is to-day just what it was when our text was first pronounced. Snow now, as then, is one of the purest and most beautiful things that ever rests on this broad earth. Take it as it comes down from heaven,—just from the hand of God,—and how indescribably beautiful it is. We are familiar with it, and have looked upon so much of it, and so many times, we at first think it is far from being indescribable. We have only to speak the word of four letters, and people know what we speak of ; we write or print it, and then seeing the word, they know what is meant. All this is true ; but true only because we, and they, have seen and handled it. Just think of a person who never saw any. Suppose on a day, in mid-summer, you should try to describe it ; do you think you would then feel like saying, I was wrong when I called it indescribable ? Never ! You would admit the fact, and more than that, you would say “ no person can from my best description get a full-grown idea of it.” They might

get an impression,—but never a thought, as he obtains who, on arising some morning, and looking out of his window, sees the whole landscape dressed in ermine, as though angels had occupied the earth all night, and at day-light had gone back into their, to us, invisible habitation, leaving their carpet and drapery on earth, out in the, to us, visible realm behind. The old brown earth gets dressed up so, once in a while, and—to me, looks like the late habitation of angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect. When I look out over the whole main, and see trees loaded down with new snow, and the ground, — plowed and grass-lands, covered over ;—many an irregularity of stone and stump concealed ; the stone walls capped, and the pure element piled along its top, I think the scene is a good resemblance of that charity which should cover up, and over, the irregularities of human life.

When in pensive mood, I look over nature thus clean and pure, I am reminded of how the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, will look. Nothing impure or irregular anywhere, but even as snow loads the branches of the trees, and makes each little twig a receptacle and pendent, so will truth and right, one day, bury deep all wrong and ill condition and sin.

Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon? asks the prophet. Will he who loves purity and right ; will he who sees in the snow an emblem of these, when he would meditate, go down from the mountains, where it is in its best estate, and wander in the streets of a city,

where it is mixed with mire, and trodden upon by beasts and men? Never! If one would get the best, and most proper; the right and just views of things, he must go where favorable views can be had.

“A giant can see over a high thing, where a dwarf could not look at all; but the dwarf standing on the giant’s shoulders, can see farther than the giant himself.”

It is now and then the lot of mortals, each and all to get into a bad position for making a correct observation, and looking from the wrong stand point, think there are more bad things in existence than good ones. Once in a while, when I think of sin in its many manifestations and forms; of slavery and intemperance, and the thousand individual wrongs in community, I am disposed to halt, and think evil to be real and actual, simply because it is great. Some people with less faith, than God, in his providence, gives me, and with less expectation that good will finally and endlessly triumph over all evil,—think evil the positive, and good the negative, and that there is no prospect, and less than no Scripture assurance that all will end well. Thank God this view is not the truest, nor the highest one humanity gets. No time is so dark, but God is trusted in for self and friends. I know that. I know well whereof I affirm. I know a family—no matter to you where, or when,—but I know it. The father and the mother still live, with five children who love them, and whom they love in return. Many a year fled, and others came, and the children were taught to believe if one of

them died in an unconverted state, that everlasting torment must be his portion. On the day after Christmas of a year when all was pleasant, no death in the family had ever been,—the chain was complete. On the day named,—out on a foreign island, a thousand miles from his home, among strangers, one of the number went to his long rest and home. He died unconverted. When the tidings came to the family that he had died, and died thus, the remaining children that night went weeping to their bed. The parents were heavy-hearted, and sad. Gloom was in the house; sorrow was bespoken by all things there; but the parents never, that night, nor the next morning, nor since, told the children that Frank was unhappy then. They have not to this day urged the question. Eight years have fled. The dear one's dust to-day reposes on a desolate island of the sea; but not one of the family is there, eldest or youngest. They of the old, or they of the new theologic faith; they who say, or fancy, they still adhere to the old, or they who know, and thank God they do not, are ever troubled immeasurably because Frank died. The common intuitive thought is, he went home; he was born again and anew that day when it was said, "he has died." No, friends. People do not, in their divinest moods of thought, leave the snows of Lebanon, and go down in the dust of the valley of Hinnom below. Preaching is one thing, practice is another. How full of good suggestion are the thoughts of the ancient prophet. He continues: "Shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?" Think of that,

all you who have been thirsty, when no water was near. Who, of all of you, or of any lot of thirsty mortals, ever left a place where cold water was flowing, and thirsting, drank not: The refrain would have been a torment. The neglect, not only a mistake, but a sin.

Now, when one thinks of these things, and in continuation, remembers our text, how can he help feeling glad that God has so constituted his children that to enjoy good is their proper, and best condition? It is not true that we naturally like bad and wicked things most, and like well to live near and with them. Sometimes we get into a wrong mood, or condition of thought, and then, for a time, dwell with a seeming comparative ease, in conditions not conducive to our highest good; but there are awakenings out of a sleep like that. The sleep itself is no invigorating one, but is rather one half dreamy and delirious, tiring to nerves and brain, or else a nightmare-ish one, where the whole being is troubled, like those said to have been possessed of devils of old. When I learn that one is a great sinner,—dead in trespasses and sins, yet apparently enjoying a life of iniquity,—I never think of such a one, in a sleep like that, as resting like an innocent babe in its mother's arms. That may repose there, and its little body and brain be refreshed, and made happy by sleep; but not so with one asleep to all that is good. He is like a delirious, fevered one, or a murderer, or a drunkard dreaming. His sleep is a torture; his rest is labor; his repose is only a prelude to an awakening that will make him stagger, his brain reel, and his whole being weak as a child.

All are sinners at times, and all, at times, sleep, and dream, and awaken thus ; but, as a whole, we are infinitely less than totally depraved, and the common instinct is to try and be happy. No movement we ever make,—not so much as raising our finger, but happiness to be attained, is the being's end and aim. We do not always act wise enough to attain it, yet we do try. All mistake some ; some more, some less ; none all the time, and none entirely. God never made any one wholly depraved, and hence incapable of being perfect, even as He is perfect,—and pure, even as He is pure. This common instinct of the human heart was a prominent thing in the prophet ; and he manifests it when he utters such thoughts as our text.

Asking if a person will leave a good thing, knowing it to be good and best, and take up with a bad one, knowing that to be bad and worst ? The church may say they believe it ; but let them not charge the prophet with such a view ; let them not say all are inclined to evil, and evil only, for as though he knew the thing was preposterous ; as though he could have no doubt but he had silenced all who would reply to him, he fearlessly asks his question, never so much as expecting a reply. We aspire after good, and God knows it. We mistake in our methods of obtaining it, and He knows that also. But I am cheered by the thought that one day the members of my race will not grope their way, seeing through a glass darkly as now. One day the poor inebriate will not only see and know that alcohol is his foe and his ruin, but he will be strong to resist, and

able to forbear. One day sin will be finished, and all dwell in the Father's house of many mansions, eternal on high.

It is Christian, and lawful, and right, to seek out and enjoy all the good we can now. Immortality's joys will be well, and fitted for our then condition and time,—but we need not wait till we die before we get foretastes of heaven. Just discipline your powers of observation, so as to enable you to see nature's God in behind, and back of all, and you rise up, as on eagle's wings. Don't let the snows of winter disconcert you, and make you think of last summer, and the joys that were yours then. Winter will come. There are many in a whole human life : winters of losses, of disappointments, of despair ; winters of affliction, of doubt, of distrust, and non-expectation of a coming good. But what of all that ? You are God's child still. He watches over you all the time. Nothing dies in the autumn that will not, either from seed, or root, or bulb, come up again in the spring. If you look out over nature to-day, the trees look as though dead, the grass and flowers as still deader, and a great devastation abroad in nature at large. None are so dead that a good resurrection will not be. I hope and perhaps expect, to live long enough to preach you a sermon on some fine Sunday in April or May, when all of worth will be back, and lovely, as nature in its most inviting conditions ever was, or can be, so will it be ; so it even is, of all the losses, and disappointments, you have made, or can have, so of all things cold, and winterish, and from which you turn

away ; but you do well ; you do a good service, when you take these, and interpret them as the prophet did the cold, flowing water, and the snow, calling them good in their order and time,—God's ministers preaching to you, and carrying you up and on to your final rest and home.

So much then for the dark, and the cold side of life. That is not all. Shall the sunny, the counterpart be forgotten ? Shall the cold flowing waters of another place be forsaken ? There are many people who think ; I suppose honestly, that there is danger of our being too happy, and that to be on the top of the mountain of composure or rest, long at one time, is to be in the snare of Satan, and dangerous now, and fatal to our interests in the hereafter. They blame the Catholics for doing penance, but they do it themselves. They think it foolish to torture the flesh, but wise to trouble the spirit. They hope for rest by and by, but hardly dare ask for or expect any in this life or now. They say a contented condition is a suspicious one ; and that he is probably doing God's will best, who continually suspects ill, and is, in consequence of the suspicion, better prepared for it. I can only reply to all this : appreciate your condition, and be thankful for it. If you think it not the best one attainable, move on and seek a better, but do not employ so much time in bemoaning, that you have none left in which to thank God it is no worse, and in which to hope and expect it will be better soon. God helps those who help themselves. I say to all to whom I preach. I say it, because the prophet so teaches me,

and because the Master himself advises, that we trust the future, taking little thought as to what we shall do or be on the morrow. Let the morrow take thought for itself. Do all your duty to-day, and to-morrow will be thus cared for, and all needed things done. One never yet did all his duty for one day, and not by the same act, all that was required of him that day for the next.

I must soon close. How our time has again flown. All things earthly are transitory, and move on. Thank God, principles, truth, right, these change never. What was true when our text was written, was true ages before, and is true to-day. Let us be happy as we march on. Let us fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. This is the conclusion of the whole matter. And then, whether it be summer or winter; without or within, we shall be at rest; whether we are in the desert, or beside the shady rock of the valley, where floweth the cool and refreshing water; whether we are in the flesh and absent, or dismembered and separate from it, and ensphered, in spirit, with the Lord; Whether in one condition or the other, we shall find rest to our souls.

## DISCOURSE VI.

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### CHRISTMAS RECOLLECTIONS.

THE ANGEL SAID UNTO THEM : FEAR NOT; FOR BEHOLD, I  
BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE  
TO ALL PEOPLE.—*Luke ii. 10.*

Eighteen hundred and sixty years completed their round last Monday night since the world's Saviour was born. You know the story of his humble repose in the manger ; of the wonderful star that stood over the place where the young child lay ; and you have heard of the things presented to him : how that when the wise men of the East arrived, " they opened their treasures and presented unto him gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh." Never before had one so illustrious been born. Never before had the walls of a stable enclosed a company like that. Never before had the celestial spheres been interested, and an especial star commissioned for service to one below. Never before were presents so lavishly bestowed, and never to a being who really needed them less. What was gold or incense to him ? What possible service could a few perishable things of this earth render to one who was even then " the likeness of his

Father's glory, and the express image of his person"—into whose hands all things had been given ; on whose shoulder the government would soon rest ; who was even then, of all others, the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace ? The things named were some of the earth manifestations ; there were heavenly ones also ; for

“ In heaven the rapturous song began,  
And sweet seraphic fire  
Through all the shining legions ran,  
And strung and tuned the lyre.

Swift through the vast expanse it flew,  
And loud the echo rolled.  
The theme, the song, the joy was new,  
'Twas more than heaven could hold.

Down through the portals of the sky  
Th' impetuous torrent ran,  
And angels flew, with eager joy,  
To bear the news to man.”

The courts of heaven had many a time before resounded with the songs of the redeemed ; many a time had a returning sinner been the cause of joy in many a seraph's breast, and caused an anthem of praise to wander on through the arches of the celestial city, but never before had there been music and praise like this. I have attempted to decide which of the things done, or manifestations made, to be most thankful for. All are beyond my comprehension, and are befitting the birth of Immanuel, which, as the Scriptures inform, “is, being interpreted, God with us.” There is one part, however, remarkably prominent, and which has long ap-

peared to me as valuable beyond our powers to either calculate, measure or tell. I refer to the time when the shepherds were trembling with fear ; when consternation had filled their breasts ; when the angels came out upon the sky and begged them not to fear, for they brought glad tidings of great joy to all people. " Glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." This declaration is my text. How soothing these wonderful words must have been : " And suddenly there appeared and was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." How well the announcement of the angels calmed the troubled waters of the shepherds' life ; how well did the heavenly host assist ; how grand that service and song. A multitude of the heavenly host was the choir. Heaven itself laid under contribution to furnish music. And then the theme of their magnificent exultation and song : " Peace on earth, good will to men." When an earthly prince travels from his own to a foreign land, the people rise and go out *en masse* to meet and honor him : the best music possible to be procured is brought into requisition ; but when the best thing is done, the service is earthly and incomplete. Not so, however, when the Prince of Peace was made flesh and dwelt among men. Then God himself took the matter in charge. He ordered the orchestra of the spirits' realm to furnish the music, and nothing short of a multitude of performers could do the work. And who but a God of infinite love could furnish a be-

fitting theme? Peace, everlasting peace, on earth, and perpetual good will to men. What mortal would have thought of making that a theme of song? To be mighty in battle, and warlike, was most noble in the world's estimation then. To sit on a kingly throne was the acme and ultimum of glory to which the highest mortal thought had attained. But a new system had begun. Glad tidings of great joy was the burden of thought ever after for the shepherds, and may in turn be to all people who in the world's history shall early or late, live. Let me now name a few things which made the tidings good rather than bad.

1st, and preëminently, because he was to be, and is, the Saviour of the world. I must be very brief in this examination. The reasons are many, but a few, however, can be named. I can only set for you some trains of thought in motion. You must do the thinking after my talking is done.

First, then, the tidings were good, because they were of the advent of a world's Saviour. Not of a Jewish one, but a Gentile's also. He was not a physician for the well, but the sick. Sick spiritually. He had the powers to do service to the body, and often did it; but that was nothing compared to what he did for the race in a spiritual point of view. When the people that were once blind, or palsied, or impotent, or even the resuscitated dead, had lived a few more years, they passed away, and their bodies were food for worms. The material aid given ended there; but what was done for individuals in a spiritual line, was done once for all,

and the influence died never. He was a Saviour, not from the just deserts of sin, for each sin after he came was and is punished just as before. Let one put his hand into fire, and it will be burned ; let him do wrong, and he will receive for the wrong that he doeth ; and with God there is no respect of persons. He came not to save people from the pains of endless hell in a future state, for none had been made, nor has any been made since. He came not to appease the wrath of God, for he had none to appease. "GOD IS LOVE." He came not to reconcile an angry and offended God, for he was always reconciled to us, and only asks that we may be reconciled to him. He saves his people from, but never in their sins. A temperance pledge is in a sense a saviour to an intemperate man. It saves him from degradation, but not in it. To be saved, he must leave off drinking ; and so to be saved by Christ, must leave off sinning. Whosoever doeth the will of the Master, the Master dwells with. Next, he saves from the fear of death. He was to rise, and he did rise, the first fruits of them that slept. Whosoever disbelieves this, and anticipates remaining in the grave forever, is not saved ; and so long as he abides in unbelief, he is without the consolations that come of believing. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." He who believes that, is saved. He who deliberately doubts, and fears that some will not be thus lifted, but cast off and forsaken of him, and either forgotten, or tormented by God forever, is not saved. Such a disbeliever is damned already. He saves from other fear.

“Behold,” said St. John, “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Any one who disbelieves, and says the sin of the world will never be entirely taken away, only a part of it removed, and the evil simply abated, such a believer, loving darkness rather than light, is not saved. Christ is no Saviour to him. Let me name one instance more, as peculiar to him, and which is the leading excellency of the doctrine he taught. He is the Saviour of all who do as he commanded. His doctrine was, Do as you would be done by. Whoever does this most nearly, is saved the most, and he who does as it is said God will one day do, which is to render evil for evil, is saved the least. The old doctrine of evil for evil, either in God or man — I say that reverently, but I think it — evil for evil, if done by God or man, is not Christ-like. But God never does that. Christ never did it ; they are not at variance ; neither are changeable in their methods of action ; and hence, never will render any thing but good. In these regards, and in the manner hinted at, as well as many more of a kindred nature, Christ is the Saviour of the world. I would stop by the way, and once more emphasise that last word. Saviour of the *world*. He will ultimately “see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.” If he came to seek and save the lost, he will continue seeking till he has found, and he will prolong, if need be, his efforts at saving until the whole are redeemed and with rejoicings come home, for he must reign till all are returned. And we are told that of all the Father gave him, he will lose nothing ; but when the

great army at last assembles ; every prodigal back, repentant and ready to remain ; with blessings upon them all, he will give up the kingdom to his Father, who ever after will be all in all, blessed for evermore.

Another reason why the tidings were good is, because there is nothing in the whole scheme to inspire any thing but trust, and confidence, and hope. Every old system of religion then existing, contained a large per cent. of element which induced fear and distrust. The Pharisaic Church ; then the popular and reigning theology, consigned a large lot of God's children to endless sorrow and despair. The Pharisees said, " Do this and that, or God will damn you, and through all eternity make you miserable. He will make a separation between even the mother and her dear babe ; there is nothing too bad for him to do, and that he will not do to you, and all who do not often appease his wrath. He may be your friend in the morning, but must be attended to again soon." Said they, " You are liable at any time to incur his displeasure, and if he takes you out of existence then, farewell to anything and everything but agony after that." Now, from such views the gospel of Christ saves, and the tidings of his mission are therefore good. There is nothing in a true Christian faith concerning a future condition that excites anything but confidence and hope. The Pharisees did not believe that God was good enough to make all his children heirs of a blessed immortality, and have all the corruption made incorruption, and that which in death was sown natural, made spiritual, and the dishon-

orable rise up glorious. They said that is heresy. We must have a hell for some people ; a hell, too, of our own fancy or conceit, and one that will last forever. Christ said you cannot have any such thing. God, my Father, is a being of infinite compassion and love, and he will in the end take to himself all for whom I shall die. " All shall come to me, and he that cometh I will in no wise cast out."

You know what came as a result of such preaching. They would not bear the doctrine of universal redemption, and to put an end to it, they crucified the preacher. And you remember what Paul said of his condition, and the condition of those who believed the better tidings of great joy to all people. He says, " We both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, and especially of those that believe." And you know one thing more that is sure : those are troubled who do not believe in the endless unhappiness of a part of the race now. I know not why it is that people so dislike to think good will triumph over evil ; but they do, and we rest the matter there. The tidings would not have been good and inspiring — joy to all people — had they been informed of the doctrine of the endless sorrow of a large part of the family of man. Christ, we are told, came to bring life and immortality to light ; that is, to enlighten the people on a question to them hitherto dark. He was said to be " A light to lighten the Gentiles, and those which sat in the region and shadow of death." Better have permitted them to remain in the dark, and be ignorant

of immortality, than by informing them, make hell thus begin below. If the doctrine of the Pharisees be true, then anything but glad tidings did the angels bring. To be permitted to enjoy a quiet repose, like the beasts of the field, were comparatively well ; to rest in the silence of an earthly grave, years without end, were well ; but to be informed that they might be awakened from that quiet sleep and agonize forever, was no tidings of gladness to the shepherds, nor is it to either you or me. I love my dear companions, and kindred and friends ; the members of our early household, living in the flesh or absent from it ; and when any have gone hence, to be among the living no more, my heart has been sad. I have followed them to a proper place for their dust to repose, and ever after the spot has been sacred, and will be till my own dust shall mingle with theirs. Consolations have come when I have thought they will be troubled no more forever. But let me disbelieve the great doctrine of immortality, and I should care little whether I soon died or long lived. The spot where kindred and friends now lie would be common and unsanctified even as the trodden highway. Rather, however, than endless unrest for them, I could bear all this, and could look resignedly upon wild beasts rooting their bodies out of their narrow bed, and finally leave their bones, fleshless and roughly-handled, to bleach in the sun and dissolve in the storm. Anything but endless sin and sorrow would, in comparison with the doctrine named, be glad tidings of great joy to me. That doctrine of the French Revolutionists, when they wrote

over the cemetery's gate, "Death is an eternal sleep," was better, and more a sentiment of glad tidings, and hence more heavenly and even Christ-like, than the doctrine of the Catholic Church of France then, or even of a part of the great Protestant Church of America, or any country, to-day. Within a few days the religious world has been astir, attempting to honor the advent of the "King of kings." The great heart of the Church of Rome has beat in a splendid unison with that of England, and catching the inspiration of the hour, a portion of that of America has mingled in the great accord. Organs have heaved their mighty breasts, aiding choirs, exulting in commemoration of the birth of the newly-born King. Eloquent words have been uttered. A splendid work, in outward form, has been done. But if the gospel he brought with him and declared, has not been preached; if the motive for rejoicing has not been in view of a successful mission and a triumphant end; if the theme of preaching and song has not been that all for whom he died will be redeemed, then in vain has been the service, and worse than wasted and lost the exultation and song.

The pious and trusting spirit anywhere; in cathedral or in his humble home; whoever he or she be; pope, or priest, or minister; king or beggar; Dives or Lazarus; some Astor or some hermit; some lady of affluence and landed estate, titled and world-honored, or some Florence Nightingale or Quakeress Fry, or some Mary or Martha, whose only brother has died; some lone and sonless widow just parted from her all; whoever or wherever she be; the pious one who hopes and is confident, and

knows, because he or she believes in the good will and power of the Saviour ; such an one is fitted to do honor and worthily commemorate the birth of the Saviour of the world. Great organs and choirs help inspire thankfulness and praise ; illuminations and pomp call into play physical elements of rejoicing and thought, but we fall back on the divine that is in us for interpretation of what we see and hear, and depend most on that. I presume, last Christmas night, the angels were as well entertained by reading the thoughts of some humble and obscure christian at home, as they were with anything done at imperial Rome.

We are fully able to greatly rejoice in the God of our salvation. So shall we be while we live, and finally dying, go home to a realm of glory, where the born and once living in the flesh, and at last dying, and next risen and finally ascended Saviour is, and will be forever. Our friends gone before are there ; the angels that gave the glory are there ; the multitude of the heavenly host — a multitude then, but more a multitude now — are there ; the prophets, the martyrs, all who have, in these eighteen centuries, gone away from our vision, are there, and await for the arrival of you and me. Let us take courage, and rejoicingly move on.

“ Our crown of life hold fast,  
Our heart with courage stay,  
Nor let one trembling glance be cast  
Along the backward way.

Our path ascends the skies,  
With conquering footsteps bright,  
And we shall win and wear the prize  
In everlasting light.”

## DISCOURSE VII.

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### LIGHT AT EVENING.

**"IT SHALL COME TO PASS THAT AT EVENING TIME IT SHALL BE LIGHT." — *Zachariah* xiv. 7.**

The chapter from which these words are taken abounds in highly-wrought figures of speech. The aim of the writer seems to be to enforce the thought that God's power being infinite, will triumph over all obstacles at last.

In the daytime, suggests the prophet, you feel safe, and hope for and expect good conclusions and returns ; but when the curtains of night have dropped, and the darkness is solemn, then distrust comes, and you are ill at ease ; but, he continues, God is Almighty. It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light. At the hour when it may seem that darkness, and that only, will be in order next, then day will continue, night delay, and finally, an everlasting equivalent to the morning will there be.

To-night these walls are illuminated anew, and more intensely than ever before. It has come to pass that at

evening time in the temple there is light. The text is literally fulfilled, and while thanksgivings are in our hearts, and each is glowing with the fire of Christian devotion and love, the angels are entertained also, and the arches of heaven are resounding with ascriptions of praise. Let us seize the occasion, and, as did the prophet of old, enjoy the prospect that stretches out before. When fire was applied to these lamps, particle after particle of darkness retired, till finally, when all had been lighted, day came back, as though the sun was above the horizon yet. This is emblematic of God, working in nature for you, and me, and the world. In the course of his providence, there are some forces that he arrests and restrains, and others that he stimulates and urges on. The outlines of his providence are sharp and well defined, but the darkness which sometimes attends, intensifies, and we are for a time bewildered ; but the darker the night, the plainer we see the stars. When the sun of prosperity shines, we forget, and enjoying light, obtain little discipline, or meditation, or thought. Let, however, a night of adversity shut down upon us by-and-by, one by one, the stars of hope come out ; like stars in the natural world they bestud the sky of our spirit's domain, and as one gazing up into the canopy of night, with the wings of his spirit plumed, and his whole being enraptured, he even loves the night, and, forgetting early unease, thanks God for light and for darkness also.

Freshness comes with the morning, but at evening there should come confidence, and repose, and rest.

And what but an unwavering trust in the Almighty can produce this? What better condition for a mortal than one which enables him to say, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep, for thou only, Lord, makest me to dwell in safety?"

"At evening time there shall be light." O, to how many a breast have these dear words brought relief! To the one whose property has taken wings of fire and flown, or in the midst of a tempest has gone down to the floor of the sea; he who for years has watched the coming of winds and the march of storms; or he laboring at the plow, or the anvil, or in the shop; or they who toil at the loom and amid the haste of machinery; or the large class who labor in no particular, but in the ruder outdoor work of life; how, when their all has gone, and a night of despair was nigh, has the horizon of their life been gradually illumined, till, at last, the full sunshine of resignation, if not of expectation and hope, was theirs. And again, when friends, just ready to die, have lived; how, when the sands had nearly all fallen, and the fluttering spirit, as though by only a silken thread confined; how, when this night was at hand, has darkness been held back, and that evening time made light. Or again, when friendship, once beautiful, but like frost-troubled flowers, drooped and declined; when those who should have been true, became tired, and their love grew cold; night coming on, and no prospect of even stars to light; how, at a time like that, has a new influence pervaded and illumined the soul. It would seem that human life has a preponderance of times like these, when

some sun goes down, and a twilight, betokening night, comes on. Night, in the world within as well as in that without, will come, and peculiarly blessed is that soul who, relying on God and trusting in him, still hopes for and expects light.

The foregoing are a few of the more patent suggestions of our text. Let us now consider some that are more particular in their bearings and nature.

1st. Light at evening is emblematic of progress in the world of intellectual life. Many an approaching night have nations and races seen, as well as the individuals of which they were composed. In the year before the advent of the world's Redeemer, "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people;" but at a later day it was said, and truly, "The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up." God was gracious then, as he is now; and at the time of evening, before the full night was, there came light. It became dim and beclouded by-and-by, and a new prospect of night and a deeper gloom yet enveloped all; but at evening, Luther lived; he spake, and as though the Almighty spoke through him, he said, "Let there be light," and light was. So in the history of other times and nations. When darkness begins to gather; when day declines and light has almost expired, the divine influence of the Creator moves over the settling chaos, and like clouds in the natural atmosphere, it loosens and grows thin, and rising, drifts away, we know not and care not whither. In the year

1775, America was troubled and sorely vexed ; trodden upon and shamefully treated by England. The daughter rebelled, and asserted that she had a right to be, and would be free. An attempt was made to sever the chain which bound, and a splendid success came. At any time that year, all was dark. It seemed to the colonists that more than evening had come ; night seemed already upon them. The head of Adams, and that of another like noble man, was just then the highest priced thing in the market. Eighty-four years gone, and the Prince of Wales, the next king of that same England, has come over to America, and is so well disposed towards her, that the people's powers are taxed to discover how best to do him, and his mother, and her court, honor. The same day of the month in this eighty-fourth later year, there arrive in the harbor of Portland, friendly English steamers, not, as on that other time, to burn the city, but to take home the Prince, whom, with love, respect, and kindness, the American people threaten to kill.

And once more. The same number of years gone, and there are assembled at the Revere House in Boston, not some English officers and some tories, consulting how best to subdue Boston and the other towns of the colony, but instead of these are the young and kingly grandson of George III. and the venerable Ralph Far-num ; the oldest man living who helped fight the battles of the American Revolution, and the youngest king of England holding friendly and sweet converse together. What darkness on that day when the tea was poured

into the harbor of Boston ! what darkness when Charlestown lay in ashes ! what darkness when two churches were repositories for hay, and horses were kept therein ! What light when the British went home ! what light when they said we will trouble you no more ! what light — how gloriously continued — when Ralph Far-num, of America, and Albert Edward, of England, were talking freely and joking in princely Boston ! And yet again, what light when this same young Prince, on the day but one after, stood gratified at the side of the monument at Charlestown.

In the history of nations, an *evening* is all that can ever come. God permits only enough darkness to exist to make the fact and presence of the stars of his almighty love visible ; and at the time of evening there is light. So will it be of all the Italian States by-and-by. The world moves. Poor Hungary has darkness now ; so has Poland and her sister States ; but God is their God, as he is ours ; and before any actual night can come, there will be light. Evening to them may be and seem nightish ; oppression may be thick like darkness, but stars will and do shine, even now. Constellations like Napoleon and Garibaldi are already seen, and magnificent planets like Kossuth. It may be evening, but no real night. No matter if the reform does at times seem fixed ; it still moves, and like the planets, will work out noble results.

In naming the thing of which light at evening is emblematic, I spoke of the world of intellect and thought. A few words have been said concerning advance move-

ments, in a national point of view. 2d. Let me propose a thought concerning the world of letters. Light at evening is emblematic of that also. The time was when the church dignitaries, and they alone, had all the book learning there was in Christendom. That was evening, or a time preceding night. We call it the "Dark ages." But O, the light since emitted from the press! Once a Bible cost as much as a man could earn in a year; now we can buy four with the money he can earn in a single day. I remember the time when the little "New England Primer," costing ten cents, was a popular book, in even week-day schools. To-day we have, instead of that dark and twilightish thing, a glorious retinue from an ever pregnant press.

3d. Light at evening represents the spiritual life of the individual and the race. Of the individual, how true the correspondence. At some time when sin has nearly gotten the mastery, and the spirit is groping its way, how, at a time like that, becoming alarmed and anticipating a thicker folded darkness and night, it arises and declares it will be free! The poor besotted inebriate many a time does this; the gambler, thinking of mother, and friends, and disgraced home; the wanton woman; the sinner anywhere; all, at times, remember lighter days and sunnier hours. That is an evening. But the human heart sends out music, sweep over which string you will; none are over-strained and broken so they can make music no more. The heart is said to be and it is,

“ Like the vase in which roses  
Have once been distilled ;  
You may break, you may ruin  
The vase if you will.  
But the scent of the roses  
Will hang 'round it still.”

Human depravity is bad, but never absolute and entire. The wayward boy at sea thinks of early days and of home. The leaer of sin is not all the time forgetful. The worst are human still. Prodigal, and wandering from home and right, I know ; recreant to truth, to themselves, their God, and friends, and heaven, but human for all that ; only partially depraved, not abandoned nor given up wholly by God to the power and dominion of sin ; but in their evening there comes light. There is no one, in his right mind, whose spiritual darkness is so real as to make him or her think the Almighty's love to them will ever fail. It may, say they, to others, but not to me or mine. When the dear son, or daughter, or brother, or sister, or the father, or mother, is laid in the grave, and the friends go home, they say, “ My dear departed does not agonize in fire inextinguishable, where worms gnaw and will not die ; but their spirits went home to God who gave them.” That is the instinctive feeling of the human breast, but the colder conclusion of the church has long been that the road leading down to death is dark. Gloom, and all things of like nature, are mentioned in connection with it ; but that time is only evening, and even in it comes light. Public sentiment improves. We hope for a full noon-day soon, when there will be

no alarm ; when the sunlight of God's love will be seen to be, as it is, everywhere, and at all times, filling to repletion every place on the earth where we now dwell, and also the heaven to which we are in good time to go. We need but to look up to heaven, and we shall see the stars. They are always shining. God is our God to-night, and so he will continue as long as eternity endures. Darkness is no real thing in the world of matter. It is simply the absence of light. Darkness in our spirit's realm is only the absence of spiritual light there. We ought to think of the sun that sets in the west, how that it will surely and soon rise in the east. We should not stand with our back eastward, gazing after yesterday's sun, but turn from the thing we lose at night and look for and expect it, or a better, in the opposite quarter in the morning, and it will surely come. The future is the place for us to look. Yesterday may have been light and good ; to-day may be dark and an evening, but light will come again.

I am happy to be permitted to talk familiarly with you here, in the well-lighted temple, to-night. You, my dear friends ; fellow mortals ; pilgrims to the undiscovered country, and travellers to heaven, will doubtless be present in this temple many times when I shall not. My prayer to the Father is, that all the time, and each time, the light emitted by these lamps shall light up and make the place pleasant and invite you and others to come in hither and keep holy time, that light divine will illumine your hearts, and that better element in you which is to live, and dwell in, and enjoy the

light of God's countenance forever. I would have the lesson of the hour photographed on the tablet of your memory, and never effaced. When, at any time of trouble, or adversity, or grief, you are inclined to surrender, think of the promise of light at evening. Do not call any hour *night*, so long as a loving Father lives and watches over you and yours. No trouble has quite broken you yet ; no time has been too dark for his power to illumine. When clouds over your head in the great out-door world are thick at evening, they obscure the moon ; but in spite of them she serenely sails above, and there all is calm. So in the inner world of your life, clouds may come in between you and God, but they never trouble or are near him. He will dispel them in good time, and then all radiant will be his face. We should love the dear old Bible as we love a friend, when we read the consoling words of our text : " It shall come to pass that at evening time it shall be light." The history of individuals and nations accords with it well. Our race is marching on, with a measured tread, to victory and triumph at last. Nations are in commotion now, but one day they will learn war no more. God is by some slavishly feared, and portentous darkness appears to be about his purposes and throne, but one day the whole will be gloriously light. For the time will be when all shall see his face, and on their foreheads will be engraved his name. " There shall be no night there ; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

## DISCOURSE VIII.\*

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### BEAUTY OF ZION.

OUT OF ZION, THE PERFECTION OF BEAUTY, GOD HATH  
SHINED.— *Psalms* 1. 2.

I presume the same kind and nature of feeling that animated the breast of the Psalmist when he wrote our text, animates and disposes us to adoration and worship now. The human heart and intelligence : and unlimited honor and gratitude to the Father of all, — our spirits also,—are like those which played their part in the ages gone ; naturally moved by divine things, and whenever and wherever a call to true worship is made, a listening ear, a devotional heart, and a living soul, has been entertained ; a beauty in Zion has been discovered, and an inclination — yea, a passionate desire created, to remain in the place and the presence of so great a good forever.

When the author of our text bethought himself of the good things of the temple,—how that there, of all places,—he had realized the spiritual presence of the Most High, he could not help crying out, “ How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts ! My soul

\* Preached at the opening of the church after remodeling, July 29, 1860.

longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord.”  
“My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.”  
As said the Psalmist ages ago, say we to-day.

We venerate and love this temple. These seats below, and the walls around ; the gallery yonder, and this spot from which has passed so many prayers to the listening ear of God. The hill of Zion itself, which to so many now living, and many more of the dear departed, has yielded

“ A thousand sacred sweets,”

All things pertaining to each and all, we love, and say,  
“ Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined,” and still shineth. “Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever.”

I know too little of the early history of this parish to attempt an elaborate recital of things pertaining to it. You do not need such a recital before you can appreciate and enjoy the present blessing. I have many a time deplored the fact that it was never my good privilege to stand in the pulpit of the ancient church, and there lift my voice to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, and declare tidings of peace on earth, and the everlasting good will of God to men. That would indeed, have been to me a joyous day, but it was not so to be, and it was not. I must wait, till like BALLOU, and PEABODY, and a host of other faithful men who stood there as mortals, but now ensphered and in glory, shall one day tell me of their joys, their labors and their devotion, and shall show me their palms and their crowns.

I was not here when with rejoicings, and feelings deeper than any that ever had an audible utterance, the foundation stones of this temple were laid ; nor was I here, when at last the services of consecration were held. You do not need now that I speak of either of these. You say for yourselves, because you feel it, even better than I can know it — “ Out of our Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined upon us, as he did on the pious worthies of old.”

To-day marks one more era in the history of the parish. We now plant another mile-stone alongside the road of our Christian pilgrimage and life. There is a mystic chain and a sacred glory connecting things of the present with those of the past.

When I spoke of the ancient temple where for nearly, if not quite a century, the fathers worshipped ; where Peabody led the devotions of all the people of the town, for half as long ; as by instinct, our religious feelings kindled afresh, and burning anew, a divine illumination for the moment was ours.

The story of the building of this edifice, is indeed powerful, but to us, less so, than that of the other. The nearness of the present success deprives us somewhat of the enjoyment of those sacred emotions which God in his good providence will by-and-by vouchsafe to those who shall come after us. They who hewed the timbers of the ancient temple, and raised the frame and finished the work, little thought of, or remembered us, of a later day, and so we are apt to forget those who at one day, and no very distant one either, will

occupy the place we enjoy and occupy now. That day is not alarmingly distant, when other lips than mine, will on this spot speak words that will fall on other ears than yours.

They will tell, and hear, of a time when nearly a quarter of a century fled since the walls of this temple were built ; before the day when neither wainscotting nor pews were painted ; no blinds to tone down the light from the windows ; nor carpet to subdue the noise from the floor ; the time when an honest simplicity, severe and unqualified, reigned over all.

But thanks be to God, the lips will also tell, and the ears will hear of the good men and women who worshipped here, how that, looking beyond the letter, they caught inspiration from the spirit, and to them, simple and unadorned as the temple was, Zion was even then the perfection of beauty, and out of it, God continually shined. The man of God will speak of this, in that coming age, and then, how cheering the thought that possibly, yea, probably, will be remembered the faithful and earnest labors of those devout and sincere ones ; the Marys and Marthas of the parish, who spoke encouragingly, and labored untiringly, and pursued their work faithfully till victory was theirs. All this will be, when the mortal of us will be reposing beneath the clods of the valley ; yet, blessed be God, we shall be back and here in spirit, and at times, shall be looking upon, and it may be, aiding those who shall come to this spot and worship, down the long line of many ages.

In meditations like the present, I see as it were a

procession made up of they of many generations. I see them start from this temple to-day, and for a few years come hither, apparently contented, and always devoutly to worship. By-and-by, enlightened by the service ; having kept pace with the time and race ; having become more and more delighted with the beauty of Zion, at last, determine to take down the walls and build larger and better, and thereby intensify their light and their joy. I see them thus deliberate and worship and build ; and then comes a repetition of all, and another and a grander temple arises in its stead, and in time, that is left for one more glorious still ; and so the procession lengthens, and marches on, till at last cometh the end, when it and all human processions arrive at the door of the temple on high—the temple not made with hands—the city Celestial, which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God.

Thanks be to his name, that he put it into the heart of some of his children to erect a Christian temple here : and thanks to him again, and never-ceasing, that he has dealt so tenderly with all, from then till now. We are here, friends, for a great purpose, and are engaged in a noble work to-day. The work we do, is greater than our temple ; it is immortal, as are we. Yes, greater than the temple ; for when our bodies and it, shall have long ago gone back and become mingled with the dust, the good done will still live, and thousands in the long future will thank those who in other days planted the church here, and the later ones, also, who beautified the sanctuary and thus made Zion a lovely place for Christian resort, where the presence of the

Most High dwelleth and will abide. No honest thing was ever yet done for the service of the sanctuary, and humanity, and the Master, and no returns of good that were not infinite and immortal ; generating and evolving a God-like influence forever.

Every cent that was given at first to construct the walls of this temple, have paid an interest compounded an hundred-fold. The whole town and community are to-day richer, and all the coming generations ; descendants of those who have been, or will be ministered to here, will call the deed blessed ; and all that has now been given to beautify and adorn it, has already been set down to the everlasting credit of the givers. Already, it is written out fully on the pages of the Lamb's book on high. God grant that when the demands of the age shall be for another step in advance, that those who live then will be as fruitful in good determination and works as you, and a return corresponding well to yours be done by them, and thus the next in order will say of them, as they will say of you, and as we to-day say of the past, " Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath continually shined." If there is any place on earth that should be made and kept pleasant and beautiful, it is the sanctuary of the Most High. That is a mean spirit which robs it, and uses the money withheld, to adorn a place that only a few eyes can see or enjoy. I know that God dwelleth not alone in temples made with hands ; that no such thing is indispensable before he can be truly worshipped. No ! for

"The groves were his first temple,  
Ere man had learn'd to hew the shaft or lay the architrave."

The heart itself may be a temple, holy, and capacious, and beautiful ; nevertheless, there is no philosophy in the doctrine, that while our houses are made commodious and beautiful ; comfortable and pleasant to a fault, that our Sabbath home should be poverty stricken, and look barnish, and mean, as though material beauty should never shine there, and should be everywhere and anywhere but in the temple. No. Rather let the place where the majesty of the divine presence is, be beautiful and inviting. Let it be indeed glorious, and of all places, the holy of holies to our souls ; so that, like the Psalmist, we can enjoy it and say, " One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple."

There has been a mistaken idea in community, that anything which will shelter from the wind, and sun, and storm, will answer for a place of Sabbath worship. People have, without much effort, convinced themselves that money, dear money, may be saved, for there is no need of a good thing at the church. Religion is depended upon to make cushionless seats soft, and ill-constructed ones easy, and many other things that would not be tolerated in one of our homes for a day, is not only tolerated, but apparently liked, and considered appropriate, and therefore endured by whole generations. Religion will do a great deal for us ; but it is only when we are *religious* that we ever get the blessing. Make the Sabbath home a bare and uninviting

one, and you do an irreligious thing. Human nature revolts, and is repulsed, and true to itself, the young are estranged, and the elder part of community get fossilized in thought, and it would seem that the life blood had ceased flowing in their very souls.

The better the facilities for worship, other things being equal, the better the worship. Make the building comfortable and pleasant; quite as good as the best home in the parish. Bring flowers to it, and come with songs of thanksgiving. Act as though you would do the best thing your intelligence or hearts can conceive. Leave outside the door all things pertaining to business and the world. Be determined to realize that this is the gateway to heaven, and depend upon it, the divine presence, as it did of old, will fill the place, and when you go out, those about you will say, "They have indeed been with Jesus."

These remarks lead me to say a few words on *individual action and life*. Thus far, you have done nobly and well, to beautify your Sabbath home. You are glad that you have done it, and I doubt not but, in good time, the other things that are as much needed will be procured. I hope to see the day when a good cushion will cover each of these seats; when in the gallery will stand an organ, to aid, by its majestic and grand music, in raising our songs of praise to the Most High; and finally, when the tower of the church will not be belless, but that, on each returning Lord's day morning, its solemn tones will peal out over the whole town, proclaiming that it is time to go up to the temple,

where for us, as though we alone existed, Zion, the perfection of beauty, is all radiant with a holy light, and waiting to shine into our souls.

I can now think of nothing that would please me more, or be more a consolation when my body and spirit parts companionship, than the privilege of remembering that, with a part of the money I did not bring nor can carry with me, but over which I had control, was used to buy a village church bell, which, for years after my voice should be hushed in death ; my tongue silent ; my hands cease to be, so that I could no longer work ; my whole body back a part of earth, should often and for years after announce that good once done is immortal, and that it is well to worship and bow down. This doing good is what makes the memory of the just blessed. God aid such as are able to thus continue their memory, for they shall be had in everlasting remembrance.

So much for things material. We need these as aids, and they make the temple proper and right ; but after that comes the spiritual light, that must be made to shine from it. A theatre building may be beautiful and gorgeous in the extreme ; saloons may be highly gilded, and glittering tapestries adorn its walls ; but theatre nor saloon ; drawing-room nor extravagantly furnished hall, ever yet possessed the power of producing that divine beauty which out of the sanctuary may be made to shine. The light and influence is too divine to be seen, and can only be perceived, and realized, and felt. I doubt not the fact, that ten devout men and

women have it in their power to light up with a religious light a whole cathedral church.

Sunday services are held only once in seven days. That light is spasmodic and interrupted. It is a chain, full of broken links ; and while it is true that honest devotion may, for the time, make Zion the very perfection of beauty, it is also true that the good daily life of the worshippers while they are not there : — six days of good Christian service out in the world and among men ; vexed, but not cast down ; troubled, but patient and hopeful ; reviled, but reviling not again ; cheerful, and ever determined to be good ; that is a service which makes the light of Zion continual, and it is shining ever. No sanctuary in which so many as ten, or even five such righteous souls worship, was ever yet a dark one on any day of the week. We do but little work or service in the church. We are there but little ; but out in the world, or at home ; there is where we may cause our light, and the light of Zion to shine best, and God, as well as ourselves, gets the honor and the glory.

I have now preached my full half hour, but am tempted to go on. There are many things I yet desire to say. I should go over the ground again, and congratulate you on your success, and should try and convince you that to-day you anew make glad my heart, as you have done before, but I will not delay now. You will think of all yourselves, and in closing I will say a word or two for the future.

We now close up the book, having written out a full new page in the parish's history. Let us see to it that

while we have charge of this branch of Zion, we do it all honor. Let us fight valiantly for truth and the right. Never be satisfied with a part, but ask for, and hope, and expect to have a full appreciation of what is good, and noble, and right.

“Let us then be up and doing,  
With a heart for any fate,  
Still achieving, still pursuing,  
Learn to labor and to wait.”

Error, and superstition, and wrong; false views of ourselves, and of our final destiny, and of God, are in the ascendancy yet. Let us be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves. Where the way is new, or dark, if we must walk in it, let us reach out and take hold of the hand of the Father, and walking thus, finally step over the threshold into the court of heaven,—that Zion where perfection is infinite, and the light of love and truth shineth forever.

## DISCOURSE IX.

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### NEARNESS OF THE LORD.

SEEK YE THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND ; CALL YE UPON  
HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR. — *Isaiah* lv. 6.

Many people, in reading this passage, obtain the idea that the prophet meant to imply that the Lord should be called upon then in particular, because the time was coming when he would be distant, and perhaps could not be found. I have heard people advise others to seek the Lord for the reason that he can be found now, but that this condition is no lasting one, for his ear will by-and-by be heavy, so that it cannot hear, and his arm shortened, so that it cannot save. That is not the God of the prophet. He would not fail, nor be discouraged. The eighth verse tells us why : “ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.” The least inviting inducement that can be held out to a sinner to return, is the sentiment that God loves him now, but will change soon, and ever after hate and torment him. That action and love is very like the action and love of mortals. I

always feel ill at ease and uncomfortable when I hear it applied to God. It is not natural for people to love unlovely things. They make the best of things sometimes, because they can do no better. If we would have people trust in God, and depend upon him just as a child depends upon a parent it loves, then the object must be made worthy the dependence. Oh, there is a heavenly side to this question of dependence. And uninviting would existence be if, outside of ourselves, there reposed no elements of entertainment and life. How the unsuspecting child in its mother's arms, confides and depends, and how, in return, the mother's affections warm up and go out in the same manner to it. How one helps the other. Human dependence is divine in its nature and influence for good ; and aware of the fact, and knowing how tender, yet strong the cord is, our Master spoke of it as emblematic of God's love and affection for his children. You remember that conversation in relation to the lilies and the sparrows ; of the giving of bread and not stone, and fish and not a serpent to the famishing boy. The New Testament is so rich, and full of this sentiment, that I am, while reading it, disposed to think the people to whom Christ talked, and those who read what he said, peculiarly blessed. This is true ; but God is not partial ; he gave the Old Testament readers good views of himself, and the text is one. Seek him, *because* he is near. Because is a better translation than the word while. Seek him because he may be found, call upon him because he is near. As if the prophet had said,

“Do not be unmindful of your own good, and think that great work must be done before you can obtain the blessing. God is near. He is waiting to be gracious. Do not think of costly service, nor long pilgrimages. He is ready to help you now. Seek him, and he will immediately bless.”

In riding through the State of Vermont, one sees thousands of noble streams that are powerful, and look as though no one owned them, or so much as knew they exist. Down here, in the lower part of this State, there are many mills, that work hard, with but little water, and yet do a large service to the whole community. I seldom see the large and good unused Vermont streams, and afterwards the little used ones about home, without thinking of the possibilities of the one, and the known usefulness of the other. Now, so look to me, not only the streams and rivers, but the oceans of God's infinite love. The unused part is a million times greater than the used. We employ only a little of it, and have but to turn to him, and how, even then, new power is brought in, and new achievements made and victories won!

History tells us what the world of mankind was without God and without hope in the world. The great pagan and unenlightened part of humanity, are to-day a vast commentary on the idea growing out of our text. God is, in one sense, just as near the savage, and is as much the God and father of the Esquimaux, as he is of the highest in civilization. But an unsought, and an unturned to, and unthought of God is, in another sense,

no God at all. There are two planes, or spheres in which God acts. One is the natural, or every-day-necessity one. He gives rain, and sunshine, and air, and makes the seasons, and day and night, with such general laws to go with them and govern, as will produce the proper physical condition of man and things. He does this to saint and sinner; to a developed intellect, or a dark-one. But there is another, a higher and better one. He acts in that also by order and law. Divine element; spiritual influence, that must be desired and sought after, and only thus can it be obtained. People generally care but little whether it rains or is fair weather, unless they have a special reason for that particular case. This sentiment holds good in most of the occurrences of every day life. They act about as careless in regard to even better things. They think they know that God governs nature as he sees fit, and will send rain and sunshine, or withhold either as shall appear to him best. This kind of resignation is very good, and is true and philosophical; but to apply it to things indiscriminately, is to mistake. A watch is good to use near the eye, but it will not answer the purpose of a town clock, to put up on the tower of a church. The laws of God, which govern and have most to do with physical and material things, are well in their place; well enough; and do their work better than it could be done by others; but they do that only. A town clock will tell the precision and haste with which time marches, and is in a sense a preacher; but to tell of eternity and of the value of time, there must be

books and a preacher in the building below. The clock work may raise and let fall a hammer against the bell, and in response a solemn sound goes reverberating over the town. That is noise, musical and well timed perhaps, but all that makes us call the notes harmonious and well timed, or that ever makes us think of melody or rythm, is the inner life that is ours. Let the clock and bell be as well disposed towards each other as they may ; let there be a complete chime of bells, and the work set in motion a machine which can make music ; all the good that comes, all the melody there is, comes from the other thing : the divine mind and intellect that is entertained by the sound, and which reflects it ; that is what gives a name and identity to music anywhere or at any time. There is a spirit, or its corresponding element, in everything. Music has a soul as well as a body. The sound is the body : the principle or element in it which inspires or calls into play the divine part of our nature, that is the spirit or soul. Take a savage, one who had never listened to any instrument of music ; carry him into a room where stands an organ ; let the player run his fingers over the keys, and as note after note is spoken, and tone after tone comes blendingly in ; the whole grouping itself together and making what we call the tune of " Sweet Home," even the rude and untutored son of the forest will admire ; his spirit will be soothed ; deep will call unto deep, and though amid " pleasures and palaces " he is dwelling, he is at home really with himself, and loves the influence that holds him. That influence we

call the "power of music;" that power is the soul. The extent of our ability to comprehend or interpret depends upon our knowledge. "Sweet Home" entertains a savage, and it does no more; but with an angel's hand, it takes up an informed and God-directed spirit and carries it inside the door of heaven. Enlightenment and advancement; continual progress keep company with the acquirement of a knowledge and companionship with God. No one who has earnestly sought the Lord did not find, not only him, but much needed good beside. Sometimes, in searching for silver and gold, miners find other minerals, for which they are not looking; so inventors, in trying to discover some hidden principle in nature, have made discoveries more valuable than the one sought. Probably more discoveries are accidental than otherwise. "Necessity is the mother of invention." Now let one go to work and resolve that he will be good, and more like God; that he will know and realize what God is, and soon he will have disciplined his whole mind and being, in a manner that will make him able to discover new principles of life and beauty in all things he beholds, for all are God's.

In the year 1781, Dr. Herschel made the discovery that the star Uranus was in reality a planet. Its orbit was computed, and a table constructed to describe the path in which it would in the future move; but instead of going in the path thus marked out, it was found to be moving off; yielding to some unknown and mysterious influence. The scientific world was interested in the investigation. New tables were constructed, but

with no better results. At last Leverrier decided, or became convinced that the trouble must be caused by some unknown planet revolving beyond the orbit or track of Uranus. He wrote to his friend, Dr. Galle, of Berlin, requesting him to direct his telescope to that part of the heavens in which his calculations located the new planet; when lo, there Neptune lay, a thousand millions of miles beyond the orbit of Uranus, and yet within one degree of the place pointed out by Leverrier. This was on the 1st day of September, 1846. Now, fourteen years after, much of fact is known about this planet. I will name one or two things in regard to it. It is found to be thirty-one thousand miles in diameter, and two billions, eight hundred and fifty millions of miles distant from the sun. The distance is so great, that a body projected from the sun, moving at a rate of thirty miles an hour, would require twenty thousand years to reach it. This discovery was made, not in attempts to find a new planet, but to mark out the track of a known one. So it is, and always has been, of things pertaining to the service and worship of God. Investigate truth. Become interested in things right and good, and the whole sphere and influence of being and life is enlarged. As the astronomers of to-day know more of the celestial world than they did before Leverrier labored, so knows the world more of God. As Christianity interprets the better part and element of all things, seeking God and studying his laws enlighten, and bless, and save. I think the thought a great one when we get even a shadow of an idea of the mighty

Neptune, and the distance from us that he is ; but it is a greater one to think of the God who made it, and has controlled it through the long ages. And again, how grander the thought that the same God, the author of suns and systems, and infinite space, is near, and listening to our thoughts even ; so condescending, and so a Being of love, that he will bless even the most helpless thing he has made. When I think of the great planetary system, and how that God is the God of that, as he is of me and mine ; near me, and will always be, and as near continually all and each of the great family of man ; I wonder that we do not call upon him oftener, and obtain the blessings so within our reach. God is said to be a very present help in time of trouble. He was never sought and not found. How out at sea in a storm ; how on the land, in a falling or burning building ; how out on a desert, when came a si-moom ; how in distress in a thousand forms has he been sought and found. We are apt to forget God when things go well ; but we remember him when we think they go ill, and as by instinct we go to him.

‘Mid pleasure, plenty, and success,  
Freely we take from him who lends ;  
We boast the blessings we possess,  
Yet scarcely thank the one who sends.  
But let affliction pour its smart,  
How soon we quail beneath the rod ;  
With scattered pride and prostrate heart,  
We seek the long-forgotten God.  
Let him but smite us, soon we bleed,  
And tremble like a fragile reed ;  
’Tis then we learn, and own, and feel  
The power that wounds alone can heal.”

The Psalmist had no monopoly when he said, "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God;" for so at times has cried the veriest sinner that has lived. There have been times when the swearer was not profane; there come times when, from lips polluted by a long course of ungodly conversation, even pious words of hallowed prayer drop like rain and distil like dew. A thousand times, in prosperity, the same lips take the hallowed name of the Almighty in vain, and like vapor, the words are by the wind swept away. But how is the whole economy changed, when is sounded, from stem to stern, the alarm-cry of a burning ship! how at midnight, on a wild waste of waters, has the vessel gone down with its cargo of human freight! and what was more prominent, amid the hissing flames, the noise of bending timbers and falling rigging, the shrieks and death groans of women and children; what has been more prominent than these? Nought but the next to insane clamor and petition of the sinner alarmed, and conscious of a distant, but for the first time to him approachable God. Could we to-day walk through the chambers of the sea, what thoughts would be awakened! Strewed over that awful floor, what treasures! what promiscuous heaps of wealth and humanity dwell there! The miser, clinging to the gold that went down with him; the mother and her dear child, with a death-grasp, held to her breast; the devotee, clutching the golden crucifix in his bony fingers; these and a thousand things are there. They are the seen; the passing

But O, the unseen ! the fears ; the alarms ; the terrible dismay that were once theirs ; the prayers put up by sinners ; aye, and we know, in some instances, the pious hopes and confiding trust ; the triumphs of the believing ; these are the unseen ; but we know they once existed and were there. Sudden alarm ; the visible approach of death ; a lack of hope ; these stir the inmost being, and the dear God is appealed to then. He is known to be near, and when sought, is found ; but it is only a second-rate blessing that such people get. There is a wide difference in the returns which at times like that come to the Christian, and those which come to him of the world. Let trouble visit the Christian ; he who for years has been on intimate terms with his God ; and he hardly realizes his tribulation. He knows that his Father is directing the force and governing the storm ; he feels safe, even when he is about to go down, and ever after his body dwell a mile below the surface of the sea. He knows his spirit will never be down there, but up on high. When an alarm is sounded, and he knows he must die, his spirit says, " that cry will call out ten legions of angels, and my better nature will be taken care of by them." It is not so with the profane ; the wicked ; the all-his-lifetime God-forgetter ; who never, till his last hour, calls upon his God, and then only that he may have help. Confidence comes into his spirit slowly, and he is sometimes compelled to die without hope, and is poor till his spirit has passed into that realm where the good condition is not of

works, lest any should boast, but the gift of God, which made him an heir of immortality and bliss.

How faithful people are to lay up the goods of this world ; how strong the bank buildings are made ; how ponderous the door locks ; how scientifically are insurance companies conceived ; how, in a word, do people attempt to carefully manage affairs which have to do with those things they cannot carry with them when they die, and which they will not have, nor miss, nor want, in the life to come. And again, how thoughtless concerning those other things that make for their rest and peace.

I would not be so wicked as to talk against the good things of this life. God gave nice odor and color to the flowers, and rich greenness to the grass, and life and beauty to nature at large, so that we mortals may have them to enjoy. This life is not, as many have thought and represented it to be, "a fleeting show," nor is it a vale of tears. There is much to trouble, and tempt, and annoy, but there is much more to entertain and bless. I would be thankful for this world, and for life, and would say to all, and with a full remembrance, too, that God hears, and the angels bear witness ; would say, enjoy life, and make much of these blessings that a good, and sympathizing, and kind Father gives you. But how wrong we act when we take them, thus lavishly bestowed, and forget to be thankful to the giver. There is not one thing of all that will not be more a blessing if sanctified by a good, earnest remembrance, that all came from the

hand of God. So let us endeavor to be, and feel, and live, and at last,

“ When the final hour shall come  
That calls us to our rest,  
Go dwell within our heavenly home,  
A welcome, joyous guest.

Still calm, though Jordan's waves may roll,  
No ills are there to fear ;  
Angels will whisper to our soul,  
Fear not, for God is near.”

## DISCOURSE X.

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### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

I KNOW THAT WHATSOEVER GOD DOETH, IT SHALL BE FOREVER ; NOTHING CAN BE PUT TO IT, NOR ANYTHING TAKEN FROM IT: AND GOD DOETH IT THAT MEN SHOULD FEAR BEFORE HIM. — *Ecclesiastes* iii. 14.

In walking through woods and fields, and along the borders of ponds and brooks, in the month of May, one is at a loss which to approve most, or like the best. If he looks at the trees and shrubs, he beholds a wonderful beauty in the nice robes they have just put on ; and the underbrush, as if to be in fashion for the season, has robed itself as gayly ; and the little vine, that last year crept up, and all winter long clung to the oak, seems touched with pride, and has splendidly bedecked itself. The fields, with a ground-work of green, are bestud with violets, or honest and familiar dandelions ; and here and there is the trailing arbutus, just departing. The rocks at the brooks have had a new life infused into the moss upon them ; the brook minnows are freakish ; the birds are joyous and gay. In a word, everything seems to be new and fresh from the hand of

God, and as though all had been pronounced by him right and good that very morning.

At a time like that, one is at a loss where to bestow particular praise. Can one thing be prodigally approved, and not at the expense of each or all the others? It is quite so in the great world of scripture life. It is always spring, and never a time is there, when one, with his divine nature in action as it is when he contemplates the fields and the trees; never, when conditioned thus, can one walk about in Bible fields, without being so entertained and delighted, that he is in a degree disqualified for the task of entirely unburdening his whole soul, and saying the best things concerning the glories about him. Sometimes he looks on the landscape made by the prophet Jeremiah. Lamentation, desponding meditations concerning his condition and that of his race, seem like a cloud heavily surcharged with thunder and lightning or the thing that makes them; and the stories told by Amos and Zechariah, and some of the others, help make up a tempest and storm; but the thoughts of the Psalmist are like the subsidings of rain and the sunshine coming after; and the good prophecies of Isaiah are a rainbow spanning over all. It is even like a whole land or township of apple trees in full blossom, their fragrance a benediction, and promising an abundant harvest. The book of Proverbs is a garden of moral roses, and pinks, and heliotropes; the books of Kings, and the Chronicles, and some others, answer well to the mountains and rocks, on which are written nature's history for ages.

Each, like things in spring time in the natural world, has an identity and glory peculiar to itself.

This text, taken from the book of Ecclesiastes, is loaded with assurance ; confidence ; knowledge, based on experience ; these are the soul of it, even as color and fragrance are the soul of flowers. What magnificent assurance is there in the very first paragraph : "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever." No language can be more comprehensive and unmistakable than that. He says, "I know it." No simple suspicion that the thing may be so ; a possibility which may by effort be turned into probability ; but beyond a doubt it was so. He knew it. Whatever God doeth ; no matter what ; if God doeth it, forever shall it be. And more yet, all things performed will remain, in nature and quantity, precisely as at first done. "Nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." Now, who that likes order and system ; who that likes to think of God as the Governor of the universe, does not admire the assurance of the author of our text, and who glories not in the fact that God is thus powerful and immutable in all his ways ? This sentiment is one of the foundation stones on which the great temple of Christian faith and hope is based. Only once let God step from his throne, and give the dominion to either man or Milton's Satan, and no more order ; no more harmony ; no more triumphing of right over wrong would there be. When I read of Milton's Satan, or Bunyan's Apollyon, or the Church's Devil, and think how he is said to be possessed of these same attri-

butes that are, by Scripture, said to belong alone to God, I feel ashamed that members of the race to which I belong, and am a nineteenth century member, should be so far behind the men who lived thousands of years ago. Change of sentiment is not necessarily an improvement. No more is this so than are all the inventions of the time a blessing. The invention of a bad thing, whether it is a machine or a sentiment, is a retrograde movement. At all events, if the invention is put to a bad use, better for those interested or concerned had it never been invented. A musket, to kill birds or animals for food, is a good thing, and for the purpose, better than an Indian's slate stone arrow; and a percussion lock is better than a flint one; but when the thing is condensed and intensified into a Colt's revolver, with six times as many barrels, and the amended machine used to kill men with, the case is different. I dislike the idea of putting such things as these and dirk knives, and infernal things like the boomerang of the Australians, into the catalogue of worthy inventions of the age. And I cannot stop here. Scarcely less worthy are some of the thought inventions of the age. Low ideas of God, and man, and his destiny, and high ones of Satan and his power, are no improvement over and advance from the large and good conclusions arrived at by men of old. Now, in this great question as to whether God is supreme or not, there can be only one conclusion, and it is that he, if any one, is above and topmost of all things and principles that exist, or nothing is.

Let me pass to another suggestion of our text ; and it is, that this immutability in God is a cause why men should fear him. I presume there are thousands of people who, with one breath, would clamor lustily against the theory that there is no devil who opposes God, with the next would urge that God, after all, is a unit, awful in his wrath, infinite and supreme ; his indignation unqualified, and his laws uninterfered with either by saint, or angel, or devil. It is passing strange that people can claim a supremacy for God such as this, and still feel bad and call me irreligious if I say, " Amen ; God is supreme ; and no fiend, either ancient or modern, interferes with him ;" but so it is. We must take human nature as it is, and not as we would have it. God is an object of fear, because he is Almighty and supreme. He doeth it that men should fear him. We contend, in this instance, with an unfortunately translated word : *Fear*. That is never the word to use in connection with the text, unless we mean by it a sense of shame, rather than servitude and compulsive acquiescence. The fact that God is almighty ; infinite in power and every attribute, and the very essence of his nature, love, should cause us to confide in him, and desire to nestle down in his bosom, and be at peace. When things earthly are transitory, and of them all ; our possessions, our friends ; all we have, changing, and to-morrow unlike to-day ; what, if not joy, should be in our breasts, when we remember that our Father above is always the same, and able and willing to save all his children, and, redeemed, and puri-

fied, and sanctified, permit them to remain with him and partake of the felicities of his own heaven, world and time without end ?

God an object of fear. Well, in a sense, he is ; just as any living and kind friend is an object of fear ; in that same sense, and in no other. If one of our earthly friends, like a mother, or father, or sister, or brother, loves us, so that they are willing to suffer, if need be, for our happiness and good ; if we think at all, it is to love them in return ; and if we fear at all — and in a sense we do, or always should — is it not that we may not appreciate the blessing, and make a proper and befitting return ? I pity the person who, when he thinks of the blessings that friendship bestows upon him, feels no distrust of his own ability to repay ; who never fears a condition of ingratitude, but who can commit the sin easily, and never know the enormity of his transgression. That condition is a deplorable one, and more to be dreaded than hours of fear and distrust such as the thoughtful experiences, and to think of which is a joy and a benediction ; an ever pregnant mother of good.

• There is much in a heathen's, and some considerable in the Hebrew's, and a good deal in some of the so-called Christian's God which is calculated to excite fear of a low and mean, but intense kind, debilitating to mind, body and spirit ; but not a thing is there in Paul's God, nor John's, nor Christ's, that would lead one to distrust or fear. If God is considered to be, in a literal sense, "A consuming fire," as many people have taken him to be, then fear, and of the commonest kind, is

very appropriate and well timed ; but if he is a Being of LOVE, and that is his very nature, then faith, and confidence, and hope, and of the very best quality at that, are the only conclusions that are right.

There are many people who talk of fearing God as they would fear a man. The cases are entirely different. When one human being is feared by another, it is because he may do violence ; an injury be inflicted, of no good to himself, and an evil to the one he injures. Now, there is nothing like that in God. If he wounds, it is to heal, just as the surgeon cuts off a worse than useless limb, or removes a diseased tooth. This simile is a good one only in part, for the cord snaps easily in twain. The analogy may not be continued. The surgeon does not always, if ever, know for a certainty that all the disease is taken away with the removed limb. At times, and even when he does his best, he knows, and he tells the patient and his friends, that the blood is still poisoned and foul, and that they can only hope for the best. That is not like an operation of the great Physician. He knows the end of everything from the beginning. No disease of mind, body, or spirit that he cannot and will not heal. He needs but to speak, and it is done ; and say the word, and things are fixed and fast.

“ Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever ; nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it. God doeth it that men should fear him.” There are many instances of Scripture where this word *fear* occurs ; and instead of being designed to beget doubt, the aim of

the writer or speaker was to inspire confidence and trust. I will quote you one case for illustration. In the 10th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, we read as follows : " Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Now, according to the use commonly made of our English word fear, we are led to suppose that there is some danger, and some people say there is a prospect, that the Almighty will do this annihilation or destruction named : " Destroy both soul and body in hell." Nothing was more distant from the thought of the Master than a sentiment like that. He says, " Inasmuch as you are bound and seemed determined to let servile fear govern and rule, then you will do better, in that line of argument, to fear God. Man can 'destroy only the body, and the life thereof ; God created, and he can destroy the spirit also. He has the power or ability to do it ; and if you are to fear and adore the more powerful of the two, he, and not man, is the object of worship." He never so much as intimated that God *would* do this. He said he *could* do it, and so say we. After saying that severe thing, as if fearing that those to whom he had spoken might think God would do this ; in order that no one could say it, and accuse him of giving countenance to the sentiment, he took care, in the very next words, to forever put the question beyond a reasonable cavil or a doubt. I quoted to you the 28th verse ; now hear the 29th, and 30th, and 31st : " Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? And one of them shall

not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." The very first verse contains the sentiment, that God is a Father. The sparrows, so cheap and common, do not fall to the ground without your Father's notice. He looks at even these little things, and smaller ones also; even the hairs of your head he knows the number of, which is infinitely more than you know yourself. "No," he continued, "I spoke of him as an object of fear; but do not misunderstand me; I only argued from your premises. Arguing from mine, I say, Fear not, for ye are of more value than many sparrows."

I might quote you other cases of like nature, but will let that suffice; and will simply add in passing, that the fact of the immutability of God and his laws should provoke nothing but confidence and trust. And when I think of the transitoriness of things earthly, I am happy to pass to the thought that God is unchangeable, and good unto all, his mercy being over all the works of his hands. Law governs everything in the universe, and only obedience to law insures a good result. A spider builds a good web, on which to live; and as fly after fly gets on it, the spider flourishes and is well supplied with food. Spider's webs are only strong enough to hold flies. Let just one hornet get partially entangled, and in a moment he tears and destroys the whole work about him. And so it is of the webs we weave, and the nets we spread, to catch food for the mind and

spirit which are ours. They hold well and securely doubts and fears, and such things, when we apply them to beings that are finite ; but if we catch and try to hold one doubt in regard to the power or infinite love and goodness of God, how the net is rent and torn, and hardly a vestige is left — nothing but a vacancy to tell of the foolish thing we have done ! No man or woman ever doubted any of the great fundamental truths of the Christian religion, and did not lose immensely by such action. And they always lose in proportion to the nature of the doubts they entertain. If they doubt whether the sun will rise on the morrow, it matters but little ; for on the morrow the sun will rise, and then all their doubts will vanish ; but let them doubt whether the sun of God's impartial love is shining now, or will shine ever ; let them become convinced that some work of man or Satan has eclipsed it, and the darkness is more real than was ever observed or felt by an Egyptian. When a person insists on the letter of Scripture, and assumes that angels in the heaven we are to go to once rebelled and were turned out, and say this was done in spite of God's wishes to the contrary, then they have no reasonable hope that they and their friends may not be thus wicked and unfortunate. When such people say that one of God's children is now, or one day may be, weeping and agonizing in trouble that will never end, then they say that so may millions be ; and unless God is partial, so must be all. It would be extreme partiality to endlessly torment one child, and as long glorify and intensify the joy of all the rest. Follow out

the analogy, and to what an awful extreme are we driven ! God partial ; worse than any of us ; hard at it, with an infinite power, to hate and distress one child, and all the others surfeited with extatic delight ! To what extremes, and to what inconsistent positions, false views of God will drive us, and how fearfully true is it that despair and its ill conditions follow in the track of distrust and a lack of confidence and faith in God, and a complete subjugation of evil, and triumph of good.

I thank God to-day that it is my good privilege to speak for a good God, and yours to hear, and think of him. We ought to be full of joy at the thought, that notwithstanding error is in the world, and wrong conceptions of the Most High afloat and adrift on the sea of theological life, that we are not veered from our course by neither nor none. It is said of Columbus, that when he was nigh his long-wished-for shore ; when the men were restless and doubting, and wanted to go back, that a lot of shore-growing sea-weed and a piece of newly-cut wood drifted by, and that taking these as an evidence that their object of interest was near, courage was inspired, and they sailed confidingly on. And so we, Columbus-like, are sailing over a somewhat unknown and troubled sea. Many of our companions are doubting and distrusting, lacking faith that all will arrive at a desirable home at last. We speak of this thing and that as presumptive evidence that all things are guided and directed well, but still other proof is demanded, and that comes in the shape of these drifting things from the shore of our heavenly home. Our text,

and those of a kindred nature, are like the sea-weeds and drift-wood to the mariner of Genoa. How full of inspiring and life-giving power are the words of the Psalmist, "I know that whatsoever God doeth it shall be forever." "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." "The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance." "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the Lord's name is to be praised." "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord."

With this I close. I have taken you to an elevation where it is proper for one made in the image of God to dwell. Enjoy the prospect and good; never doubt; never fear any condition except one wherein you are disposed to sin, or be ungrateful, and get less a blessing. You are made but little lower than the angels. God is your Father; Christ your elder brother; all ye are brethren, and one day will be perfect and blessed, for God hath purposed, and he will accomplish. "Whatsoever he doeth it shall be forever."

## DISCOURSE XI.

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### GOD OUR REFUGE.

**THE ETERNAL GOD IS THY REFUGE, AND UNDERNEATH ARE  
— THE EVERLASTING ARMS. — *Deuteronomy xxxiii. 27.***

The chapter from which our text is taken contains a catalogue of God's especial blessings to the twelve tribes of Israel ; but of them all, Asher's was most comprehensive, and contained suggestions of noble aspiration and thought. After enumerating things of a temporal nature, such as a large family of children, who, together with himself, would enjoy the good will of others, comes the declaration recited in the text : "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

We may well doubt if a rehearsal of either or all of the other blessings awakened better feelings in their large hearts than did this. Once convicted of its truth, how they afterwards must have loved and adored ! They lived in a new world, and enjoyed a new life every time they thought of God as present, and their refuge and his arm protecting and holding them up. He was more to them after that than "One mighty in

battle." He was not simply enthroned in a distant heaven, but seen and preached of by nature at large ; in the fields and on the mountain top ; in the stars, and wherever on the face of the earth they might happen to be, or could go. They did not get all the possible assurance from the letter or verbal declaration, but from the infinitely larger volume of nature in them, or in the great world without. And so it is of all who live now. I have not received my highest and best conceptions of God while listening to a sermon pronounced by human lips, neither have you. Sermons aid in acquiring a taste for meditation on divine things, and they serve the purpose of making us familiar with such service ; but a human, flesh-and-blood preacher is a very inoperative and powerless one, compared with some of the elements in nature. If a man in thoughtful mood goes out on a starry night, and looks up to the sky, he is preached to of infinity and of God. A preacher may, in a pulpit-discourse, speak of the constellations, but let the man see Arcturus, or little Alcor ; let him think a thought or two concerning them, and his soul preaches to itself. Let him go out into a desert, and with nothing but sky above, and sand beneath, and distance all around, he sees and knows, he feels that there, is more than all, or either. He never thinks himself entirely alone, because the all-pervading presence of the Father is with him. That place never existed yet where a human being, in good condition and health of mind and body, thought himself to be entirely alone. Let him think a wicked thought, or let

him in that, at first sight seemingly secret place, attempt an unprincipled act for another's injury, and thoughts of his supremacy; of personality and single presence vanish, and ashamed, he feels and knows that an unseen, but nevertheless all-powerful eye looks upon him. He remembers, and is ashamed and condemned. It is natural for one to believe there is a God, and an ever-present one, but we are not at all times disposed to make the fact one of value to ourselves. There is a great deal of self-sufficiency in human nature, and people often attempt the performance of great things, with a sort of assurance that they and not God rule.

Letters patent is said to have been granted to a company of Dutch merchants, who lived an hundred and fifty years ago, to have exclusive trade on the Hudson river. The patent implied, and the men thought they were to have the monopoly forever. For a time the thing worked well; but by-and-by God looked to it, and then a new and a greater people came, and revoked the whole; and now Frenchmen and all men, even Congomen, sail up and down and trade along its length at will. Not long ago, when I saw a venerable colored woman selling fruit on board a steamer on that noble river, as I was thinking of the letters patent to the Dutchmen, I was forcibly reminded of the fallibility of human enactments and law, and of the immutability of the enactments and laws of God. "He hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth." He never meant that white Dutchmen should do all the trading on the river Hudson. Let

the assembled wisdom of the Colony attempt to grant it, the moment the pen was put to the instrument making the thing a matter protected by law, even then the work of making void the permission had been done by Him who sitteth in majesty on high, and looketh to the acts of the children of men.

There are many lines of thought suggested by our text, but we can now follow only one or two of the many. I suppose we shall do well to take the text in its simplest and directest form : "The eternal God is thy refuge."

What a fulness of benediction it has ! The eternal God ! He who is from everlasting to everlasting, without beginning of days or end of years ; in whose sight a thousand years are but as yesterday, and who knoweth no change ; the Lord God Almighty ; the self-existing, the infinite Jehovah, and Father of all. "The eternal God is thy refuge." How the soul of Asher must have bounded and leaped for joy as he caught a glimpse of his good estate ; and how ours is lighted up with a divine radiance as we contemplate the blessing. Not a doubting, mistaking, short-sighted mortal ; one vascillating and alternating between the seen and the imagined ; who to-day is, but to-morrow a clod, mingling with the earth ; whose whole history is told when it is said, "He was, but is not ;" not such as he, but the eternal God is our refuge. Passages of holy writ, informing, or rather reminding us that God is our *benefactor*, our *guardian*, our *friend*, are good ; and how refreshing like the dew are thoughts of the fact : God

our *benefactor* ; looking tenderly to our needs ; and when we most desire or lack help, coming to us, and like a perfect one, doing better than we could conceive, or ask, or think. God our *guardian*, and the guardian of all souls. His eye never slumbering ; no sleep to his eyelids ; but continually caring for us, and the sparrows, and the lilies, and all things he has made. When danger is near, and we know it not, kindly warding off the blow, or if best, letting it fall near, or upon us, and then giving strength to contend and bear, or else, if better, permitting us to die ; to loose our hold on things of time and sense, and the spirit go out free and well, and be so forever. God our *friend* ! What words can be used to tell all the story now ? How we falter ; how helpless we are, when we would tell the story of the Father's never-ending friendship and undying love ! Let no attempt of mine to delineate it weaken the thought. Tax your powers of conception to the uttermost ; exhaust your energies ; give free rein to your imagination, and you then but hint at the glorious fact which reposes just outside, and extends to infinity beyond.

Yes, it is good to think of God as our benefactor, and guardian, and friend ; but these are not all. He is our *refuge* also. He is one who not only forever will come to us, but he is one we may go to, and receive shelter and defence. God our refuge ! When storms in the outward world suddenly arise, how naturally we run for shelter beneath even a shelving rock. Sometimes we consider it a privilege and blessing to simply

stand in the lee of a large rock or a great tree, and then, when the wind blows and we are shielded, we feel happy, and grateful thoughts play through the soul. Instances have occurred when, in an hour, and at a time and place where home was distant, the sky became veiled with clouds, the lightning streamed freakishly over an inky sky, and the great diapason of the thunder pealed out as if exultant, and desirous of doing homage to the storm-king; when beast and bird were awe-stricken and at rest; and at last, when beneath some temporary roof you sojourned while the rain descended, and all nature was aroused and in action, how has your heart been aglow, as you felt safe, and sheltered, and well; your refuge good enough, and so you, not alarmed, but rather resting, and conscious of ease and a lack of solicitation and care. That is a thing that may occur once or twice in a year, but not very often. It is only once in a while that you can be so situated and conditioned as to be in such need, and conscious of a lack of shelter, that a simple refuge will be a provoker of a full-grown remembrance of the good you have and enjoy. But it is not so of that refuge, of all others, the first and best; that "present help in time of trouble;" Him who is able to save to the uttermost, and whose "everlasting arms are underneath."

I am not one of those who, for the sake of effect, would try and make out that I discover a particular beauty in every passage that I read. Many are less so than others; but this one is not of that class. The word *less* is not a good one to use here, for there can be none

more beautiful and soul-inspiring than our text. I will not now delay to repeat what I said at first, in regard to the unchangeableness and eternity of God, nor to talk again of his being our Father and Friend, but I must say once more that I admire the noble sentiment in those dear parting words: "Underneath are the everlasting arms." On them we may rest and be secure. If the tidings had been that his eye was looking; that his feet were ready to turn towards us, and his ear not heavy so that it cannot hear, and his arm not shortened so that it cannot save, that would be good tidings and well; but when it is said his arms are underneath, how confidence is inspired, and how all seems better — even best and complete! We need to know this, else the blessing is less a blessing. We need to be aware that the shelter and refuge exists, else it will do us but little good. When we do the best service to ourselves, we discipline our nature, so that we confide in God, and feel at home with him, realizing that we are never so distant, but at the first signal of an impending storm; when the first cloud arises; ere the first flash of the lightning of affliction has flitted across our sky, or the first mutterings of the thunder of trouble is heard, we go, as by instinct, to him, and there find shelter, and refuge, and rest. When the curtains of heaven drop, the birds retire, and finally, when the storm comes sweeping along, they feel safe; and so should we feel safe, and in time of storm and trouble repose on the bosom of God. I think the best advice I could give you, or that any one could give me, would be to try and

attain just this condition named. How well it aids us ! and how lighter are the burdens we then bear ! What storm can be severe enough to reach us ? What bolt of sufficient power to smite or harm ? What drop of injuring rain can come near to stain or trouble us, if so be we dwell in God and he in us ? Trouble *will* come, and like rain, it will drop and spread over us ; but it cannot touch the spirit while the wing of the Almighty shelters. That simile of the Master's was a noble and sublime one. A hen gathering her chickens under her wings. That was a simple illustration, and I suppose the wiseacres of the time ; the " Athenians," and polished people of the day thought he stooped very low when he talked thus, and said a thing that could be readily understood ; so much so that even the common people heard him gladly, but no rhetorician ever said a more potent thing than that, and no sublimer thought was or will be in human language conveyed. The idea of the Father of all sheltering and protecting those who have no power to help and take care of themselves ; that was a rich thought, and full of a divine power and beauty. It is soul-inspiring to think of God just as Moses, at times, and as the Psalmist almost always, thought of him ; as one to go to, at any and all times, and be sure of finding him at home, and ready to do for us just the right and best thing.

It would be a pleasant task for me now to repeat to you some of the passages in which the good condition is set forth. You would hear me read in particular the whole of the twenty-third Psalm, and the twenty-seventh, and

others of like nature, but I forego all. Read for yourselves. The Psalms are full of a good and confidence-begetting power. If I had time I should, in turn, speak to all who mourn. A whole discourse, however, would be used in talking to them. God is *their* refuge, and his arm is beneath them and their friends ; with them in the flesh, or ensphered and sinless, rejoicing on high. He is a very present help in trouble ; He is the rock which is higher than they. I should speak of God as a refuge for the oppressed and the down-trodden ; the troubled in mind, body or estate ; to those who have little hope of an early rest. I should commend all to that God whose mercy endureth forever, and on whose everlasting arm they may confidently rest. I would ask ; I would, as a brother, in earnest entreat the *young* to remember their Creator in the days of their youth ; to begin early to seek the good things of the kingdom, and never be so rash or so fool-hardy as to be ashamed of the dear God, who will do for them so well, and keep them safely to the end. I would ask the *middle-aged* to refrain from an undue devotion to the things of earth and sense, and give a part of their time and thought to begetting confidence in God. And the *aged* — thanks to the Father, the service to them is less needed — but I would say a word of cheer to them ; and the burden of my words and thoughts would be : God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Though you walk through the valley and shadow of death, you need fear no evil, for his rod will sustain, and his love will be about and over you and yours, here

or in heaven forever. I would speak to all these, but cannot now. You see how that the enumeration of them is wearying. The theme is boundless ; and while mortal, we can never say our best things, nor do our best deeds. We must wait for eternity for that. Thank God, that is ours ; and then, if not now, shall we be able to realize that God is our refuge and strength.

I feel tempted now to break away from custom, and have my fill of entreaty for you to awake to the subject upon which I have talked, and you listened. I will close by finally commending you to take home to your hearts the thought of God's goodness and love. The God of all grace aid you, in whatever condition of life you may chance to be. In trouble, to be confident of an early deliverance ; in prosperity, thankful ; and finally, when the feverish dream of life with you shall end, and the chequered scene be over, may you fall away and recline peacefully on that arm which is now, and will be everlastingly underneath ; holding securely you and all you ever knew and loved while in the flesh a mortal.

## DISCOURSE XII.

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### COMPENSATION IS LAW.

BE NOT DECEIVED ; GOD IS NOT MOCKED ; FOR WHATSOEVER  
A MAN SOWETH, THAT SHALL HE ALSO REAP.

*Galatians vi. 7.*

There is nothing in God's economy more apparent than that compensation is a part thereof, and in good time all things are balanced. If electricity becomes imprisoned in a cloud, it exerts its power, and recognizing the law, goes out, as if maddened, over the sky, tearing away everything in front, till it is evenly distributed, and then only will it repose. "If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth," which, like a thirsty child, drinks till it is surfeited and can drink no more. A thorn-bush never bears grapes, nor do figs grow of thistles. The law has to do with everything, and is acting and true all the time and everywhere, as much, and if possible, more, in matters pertaining to morality and religion, than those of a material

nature and form. In spite, however, of the fact, at once so inevitable and well-defined, there are people who think it possible to escape results, and atone for sin in another rather than the declared and legitimate way. The theory of offering sacrifices did not die when the church of the Pharisees was lost in the rising glories of that of Rome, nor when that gave birth to the church of Luther. The Methodist, the Baptist, and the Presbyterian churches, with all their kindred, near or remote, start from one point, and arrive at the same conclusion. There is scarcely one important fundamental doctrinal sentiment held by either division of the so-called "Evangelical Church," which is not tenaciously adhered to by each of the others. When we sum the whole up, and give, in a few words, the great aggregate and absorbing sentiment, it is that "Inasmuch as there is to be, in the coming state of existence, a *heaven* and a *hell*, both to endure time without end, one should do his best to

"Escape from hell and fly to heaven."

Each recognizes a God of infinite vengeance and wrath, but who may be everlastingly pacified by acts of mortal men.

There is another class, and to it we, as Universalists, belong. We believe and declare that all and every sin will be punished, and that there never was and never will be a sin committed that will not be taken cognizance of, and justly dealt with by Him in whose sight

even the heavens are unclean. To sustain the conclusion, let me quote two passages. Paul says, at Colossians iii. 20, "He that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done, and there is no respect of persons." At Proverbs xi. 21, we read, "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." Let me now quote a few words from the "Westminster Catechism," to show you how it and the word of God agrees: "Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us." Christ suffered, and in spite of the declaration of holy writ to the contrary, he that has done wrong, receives *not* for the wrong he has done. Continues the Catechism, "Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time." All this is related of the very Being who is said to be identical with, and indeed, the very God himself.

With such views we take issue, believing that every sin *will* be punished, and that neither repentance nor reformation can arrest the penalty due for sins already committed. No man is saved from punishment, but from sin itself. The pledge signed and faithfully kept by an inebriate, cannot undo what has been done. He may be saved from the evils of continued transgression; but if he has become diseased, he must suffer, and wait

till eternity shall rid him of evils incident to the flesh and transgression. The gambler may regret the loss of his money, and deplore his waste of time ; he may repent, and ever after be upright in the sight of God and man ; but what he has lost, he can never regain. Be he never so successful and rich afterwards, he might have been successful longer, and richer at last, had he done better at first and all the time since.

I start, then, with the fact, that all sin will be punished. Next, let us observe the time and place in which punishment is inflicted. If we except what we read in the Catechism, the Hymn Books, and some other works of the kind, together with what some people say, we must believe that here, on this earth, is the place, and now is the time. The Scripture says, at Proverbs xi. 31, "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth ; much more the wicked and the sinner." As there are none that do good entirely ; no, not one ; even the so-called righteous being in a degree wicked, they are recompensed some ; and he that is a greater sinner will be recompensed more. Now, as without qualification we are told that both are recompensed in the earth, let us be content to take the Bible as our guide, trusting to it rather than to the opinions of men.

Admitting, then, the fact declared, let us next consider the manner of infliction. This may occur in either of two ways.

1st. In a consciousness or realization of the ill effects of transgression.

2d. In a privation of the good one might, but does not enjoy.

In the first catalogue come pains of heart and unrest of mind ; the troubles of conscience and the ministrations of remorse. There come days of despair and distrust, and wearisome nights, when there is an absence of power to command the troubled waters to be still. Speak not of continued ease for one who has done wrong ; for the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. " There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

But some will say that conscience at last becomes hardened, and then punishment ceases. To a casual observer, this reasoning appears well ; but nothing is more distant from truth. One cannot retain his senses and be long unconscious of his condition. Take the most abandoned sinner that exists ; — is he ever, long, entirely at ease ? Suppose he be a pirate. Is he a happy man ? Sails there on the expanse of water a vessel more skilfully manned, and with a better watch on deck than his ? Is there one with better signals, and more able to disguise both character and name ? If he is at ease, why the vigilance ? If he fears nothing, why the preparation ? Think you of the many resorts of the transgressor to hide his sins ; each is an evidence of his consciousness of guilt.

Admit, however, that one may become so hardened that he will experience no pain or discontent. Is that condition no punishment for sin ! Do not all desire to retain their ability to taste, and feel, and see well ? Is it not a calamity to be deprived the use of these ? The parallel holds good with things of the heart. It is only

when conscience is in its best estate, that we are in our best condition ; for there is a liability to be led astray if conscience sleeps and neglects its work. When we sin most, it is when we think least. When we feel most at ease, and that little or no attention is required ; then we are tempted and fall. How unfortunate is he who is possessed of only an abused and diseased conscience, which, when aroused from sleep, is powerless at defence, or to deter from sin. How many sin unguardedly ; and when they think anew, resolve to sin no more ; but in spite of good resolutions, fall again and again. What information could be given by the inebriate ; what experiences could the gamester relate ; and what sorrow is like to that of a dissolute woman's. Is a state of body and mind like this no punishment for sin ? Is this wreck of one's spiritual nature of little moment, so that the future alone can visit a recompense of reward ?

Take them all ; — the active conscience visiting pain and remorse on a guilty unsheltered soul, or the sleeping one, taking no cognizance of wrong doing, — the soldier guard of the spirit's interests sleeping at its post, while the marauder is despoiling goods, and making the man powerless at defence when he awakes. Is this to be desired, and no punishment for sin ? Or, the conscience, weakened by alternations of activity and sleep, like a sluggard yawning and benumbed, who before entirely awake, takes another opiate, and sinks back into the arms of another sleep. Is this no punishment for sin ?

Let me now say a few words in regard to punishment when it comes in another form. Take the man who spoils his eyes because he desires to put beyond question the sight of undesirable things ; has he not deprived himself the pleasure of ever looking upon those which have power to make him rejoicingly happy ? If unwelcome sounds have grated harshly on his ear, and he resolves to and does spoil his sense of hearing, does he not consign himself to privation till death ? No sound of music, nor one of affection, nor one of prayer, can be his, till he sees the last of earth. And so of all his senses ; if they are ruined, desolation, like moss, grows over him. Is there no analogy between him and one who has made a wreck of his spiritual estate ? If conscience has been so hardened or diseased, that the hungry may cry for bread, and he with ease turn away ; if the thirsty ask for drink, and he is delighted to aggravate their thirst ; cold pinch the naked, and he in derision laugh at poverty, and mock its cry ; lamentations fall on his ear, and he be disposed to break out into a riotous laugh, or to urge into being a libertine's jest ; remembrances of home, and early, happy days ; the prayers and solicitations of a fond mother ;—if when these come, he can with ease turn from all, and whistle away their benedictions, is there nothing deplorable ? Must the future be waited for, to produce a sorrow and a curse ? Is not such an one deprived of many an hour of happiness and good, which the world cannot take nor give ? Hours of the

"Soul's calm sunshine and heartfelt joy."

Is there an escape from punishment there ?

We are all guilty, and before a righteous God we are condemned. How much we have lost. Worlds of holy joy have we squandered in the days and years now forever past ! Verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth, and he that doeth wrong, receives for the wrong he does.

If one plant not, he may not expect to reap. Fields may exist, and the soil be good ; there may come early and latter rains ; frosts may be withheld, and God's blessed sunshine all day long invigorate the earth ; but if there is no seed time, there will be no harvest. And so it is with the spirit. If one's conscience is hardened or abused, it will not only be disabled in power to deter from sin, but also to commend when good is done. The whole sphere and influence of the being will be limited, and he will be less a man.

In the short time that remains, I want to say, in addition to what has already been said, that it may not be unreasonable to suppose that *consequences* of transgression in this life may extend into that to come. Let me not be misunderstood. I know not of so much as one passage of Scripture intimating that one of God's children will be in the least degree unhappy there. I do not believe such will be the case. There is in all the record but one passage defining the condition of the dwellers in that land of delight, and that thought is advanced by the Master himself : " They that obtain that world, and the resurrection, are like the angels of God in heaven." Brevity of time compels me to leave the matter there.

I can conceive that consequences may extend beyond this life, and in a sense be a punishment for sin. I will give you the thought, admitting it to be only a speculation. I start from the premises, that when we come into being we possess germs of intellect and spirit which, if cultivated, will bear fruit ; but if permitted to wither, we may not expect an extended harvest. It follows, not that unhappiness must result, for God has ordained even ignorance to be bliss. Let me illustrate : If one's intellect is disciplined, it expands, and grand emotions live in the soul. But does it follow that the undisciplined is necessarily miserable ? By no means. The rude savage

“ Sees God in storms, and hears him in the wind.”

He is happy in his low condition and limited sphere ; but is not he who has ascended the hill of science, in advance ? The heavens to him are an opened book, in which is written the grand old cathedral music of the spheres. Cantata and recitative are there, and pastorals wrap him in devotion.

The geologist takes up a rude stone, and reads it as he reads a book, and translates with a power which to the son of the forest is forever denied. To him it is a leaf of the great book of God's own history of nature, carefully written, and leaf after leaf folded down, through successive strata, to the very foundations of the earth. The botanist sits down beside a plant, and discovers in it results which have been worked out by the

combined forces in nature. The conchologist holds in his hand a shell, and its whirled outline discovers to his disciplined mind the mysterious ways of Providence working in nature for man ; and if he but raises it to his educated ear, God himself speaks through it in a language which can be understood only by one learned like himself. And thus, in their turn, every cultivated intellect comes up to the fountain of intelligence, and as he is qualified, drinks of the waters of life. The ignorant may not be unhappy because he is unable to drink as much. Such know not that the fountain exists. It is only they that have drunk that are thirsty and desire to drink again. Consider now the analogy. May it not be as true of one's spiritual estate? Every lesson he learns concerning nature enables him to better look through and see its God. Every good deed develops his spiritual being, and will enable him to enjoy more of heaven when he shall be removed to its surpassing glories.

Daniel Webster did not become the man he was, but by patient toil and labor. Wesley, and Channing, and Ballou, and all the saints who are now in glory, and to-day look down upon us, observing how we are using our means for the attainment of spiritual good,—none, not one of them, became a saint in a day. They watched and prayed, and toiled, till at last they were permitted to put on their robes, and finally entered their rest. They were translated then, and are giving to God the glory now.

It is not entirely irrational to think that conse-

quences may extend beyond the grave, so that if we do well, our spiritual nature will be developed here, and be all the more capable and better fitted for enjoyment there ; and also, that it remains with us to say what shall be our capacity ; whether we will enter with one or with many talents.

When we awake in his likeness, we shall be satisfied, and in one sense that is enough. All will be full, but the quantity contained or experienced may, for aught we know, depend entirely on the capacities that are respectively ours.

I have thus, Christian friends, passed in review the doctrine of the punishment of sin, as in the light of reason and revelation it appears to me. Portions of what I have said is speculation, but the real is Scriptural, and the word of God is my authority.

I named the effect of transgression as a thing realized and felt ; how that no one has a right to expect to do wrong, and still be at continued ease ; that conscience will at length be aroused, and then single handed its owner must contend. I also said a few words about the unconscious condition ; that many an hour of good would remain unenjoyed. When I think of the terribleness of one, and the desolation of the other, I am constrained to think that, to induce men to deal justly, and love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, no doctrine of eternal agony is needed.

Let me close by asking you to daily recall the fact declared in our text, that " God is not mocked ; but whatsoever a man sows he will surely reap ;" and as

we do not sow in one field and reap in another, neither let us think to escape now, and experience in eternity conditions that belong alone to time. "Now is the judgment of this world." No sin can with impunity be committed. "He that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong he doeth." "He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting."

"Thou canst not toll in vain.  
Cold, heat, and moist, and dry,  
Shall foster and mature the grain  
For garners in the sky."

## DISCOURSE XIII.

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### VISIBILITY OF ONE'S CONDITION.

NOW WHEN THEY SAW THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN, AND PERCEIVED THAT THEY WERE UNLEARNED AND IGNORANT MEN, THEY MARVELLED; AND THEY TOOK KNOWLEDGE OF THEM, THAT THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS.—*Acts iv. 13.*

It is an undeviating law of nature and God, that like should beget like. Contagion is not simply a correlative of disease. Infection is as true of thought and action as it is of fever and plague. It is not easy to disguise facts concerning our late whereabouts and the communions we have recently held. A bee walks into a flower, straddles over its anther, or moves among its petals and goes out with legs and trunk heavy with farina. A child from amid flowers at play returns, and at every crossing of the texture of its garments, and along the line of every filament are deposited minute packages of odor, and as the little conservatory moves from room to room they are unpacked, and fragrance, like the presence of the Almighty, permeates and inter-

penetrates realms unexplored by mortal eye. We carry with us an influence obtained at places where we have been, and as things there were well, or ill, so are we. An early thought, then, suggested by our text, is, "The visibility of one's condition." The people took knowledge of Peter and John. They knew; no one doubted that they had been with and received influence from Jesus.

A particular atmosphere and degree of warmth will bronze the human face. A blue sky overarches a blue sea, and a beclouded one reflects itself; so is it of the human race: susceptible to influence and change, each part of it both gives and receives. A young man puts into his mouth an enemy that will in the end steal away his brain. Pretty soon insulted nature hangs labels on the outside of him, telling of conditions within. By and by his career of debauchery is under full headway, and then tattered garments flutter and flap like penants in the wind. He has tarried long at the wine cup, and now is bitten as with a serpent, and stung as with an adder.

We can put no mask on the face of nature; the sun may be eclipsed and hidden from mortal view, but beyond the intercepting object all is light and clear. Clouds like a vast panorama move between us and the moon, but they are no mask on her face. Millions of miles of unobstructed space repose between.

"In majesty serene she walks on high,  
O'er the vast deserts of the lofty sky."

Nature is not well entertained by masquerades, and she is most insulted when some mortal has become befooled in attempts at deception or disguise.

The gambler, and libertine, and fop, conscious of bad things done, and good ones undone, knowing well that people of honor and respectability will not let them pass as current coin, but make a large discount, try to hide their deformity, and tailors and barbers are hired to cover up the man. Veils bought with money are transparent; no one yet has been sufficiently opaque to hide the features of a full grown sin. "Murder will out," and lesser sins, in spite of the sinner, show themselves from the shades behind which they repose. Tide water retires from a beach, and leaves muscles and kindred fish below; they breathe afresh, and bubbles tell that animal life exists beneath. Buried sins live and breathe, and though hidden from ready view, they effervesce and foam, and push their frothy generations into the realms of outer life. Sometimes near the foot of a hill, a spring finds an opening and goes out in a nice little rill, meandering over the plain. The water looks clear, and it flows freely; we stoop down and bring up united hands, dripping, brimming full, and next, instantly let go all, and with distorted face, attempt to cleanse and pacify a rebelling mouth. Magnesia and sulphur, and iron, are in the water; bad tasting alkalies and oxides abound, and hard things are said of the unfortunate rill. We follow on and find its end at a ditch or morass, with banks yellow with minerals, and filmy platings on plants and

stones. We wonder that the water looked clear, but thinking of things in the hill, that in journeying through the dark corridors the water came in contact with this thing and the other ; we decide that if it come out at all, it must come contaminated thus. The disguise lasted only so long as the water was left alone. It is so of him who has been contaminated with vice ; he must not speak, or his words will betray him ; he must remain as dead, for action will condemn him. Commands go forth from the council chamber of a nation, to put in order ships and forts and guns. Foundry chimnies send forth caravans of smoke ; shot and cannon are cast, and anchors and chains are forged below. Trumpet and drum, and edict, convene armies, and the world anticipates a series of battles ; special preparation argues war, and a realized need of defence.

A profusion of cosmetics and extravagant displays of finery, suggests that the bearer craves extraneous aid. The drum beat of a forced exotic fashion is a roll call of faculties which unmolestedly occupy the otherwise vacant domain of common sense. Affectation and attempts to appear otherwise than one really is, tells of a consciousness of imperfection, and it is not unfrequently an expression of willingness to purchase the good opinion of outsiders at the price of truth and right. Foppishness and charletanry are arguments of an absence of better things.

“ True loveliness needs not the foreign aid of ornament,  
But is, when unadorned, adorned the most.”

Innocence rests anywhere, and is at ease whenever it acts out itself. A child plays about the track of a railway, till finally tired, yet unwittingly confident, it lies down and sleeps on the very line of instant death ; nor engine, nor heedless train disturbs his repose. He rests as well as though nothing but God's untroubling earth was beneath, and his lofty sky above him, with no possibility of anything ever coming between. How unlike is the two-faced sinner. He is an epitome of distrust. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth," and to him the solitary place even is peopled with unwelcome forms ; the silence of night is more annoying than the din of noon, and solitude is the pregnant mother of distress : no place of rest for him, save when he chances to sleep, and as a conscious being, ceases to exist. He carries *himself* wherever he goes. His diploma is his condition, and he is written all over with certificates, that he is a graduate of the school of sin.

The human voice is made so as to produce sound, and of such tone as to convey the image of a thought, but there are things to declare which words fail and language resists. A smile touches finer cords than a riotous laugh, and a tear is more eloquent and potent than an ejaculation, or an oath.

The "Marseillaise Hymn" stirs one to arise and consider earthly glory ; but a full-grown thought of "Sweet Home" kisses the spirit into the realms of the Father's inexhaustible love.

The eye of a contented ox tells of patience, and en-

durance and ease ; but the snakish eye of a guilty sinner speaks of impatience, and of ill conditions, which he seeks in vain to disguise. Visage and attitude tell what a person is ; and these speak the truth when language would give them the lie. Eyes are not a whit inferior, as judge or jury, to hands and ears.

No man of intelligence ever yet gazed on the picture of a New England Puritan, and mistook it for that of a Young American. His stern visage—the exact cut of his coat, and his air of determination, speak of exact correspondence within. Circumstance gives to us tone of color ; and we, in return, reflect back the borrowed light in which we shine.

The text declares that Peter and John were bold, and that was the influence they received from communion with Jesus. So it is of all who commune with truth and good now. Truth, as of old, makes free. He who clings to error, is so long enslaved. When Peter was confident, he walked over the water, as on unyielding earth ; when he doubted, he sank. When he was honest, and committed for the right, he said, Though all men betray my master, I will do it never. When he had sold out to Satan, in reply to the assertions of a simple servant girl, he said, “I know not the man.”

Timidity and cowardice come of wrong deeds. Distrust comes of wrong opinions — and there is many a world's-opinion saint who is all his life time subject to bondage, through the fear of death. The things Peter and John learned of Jesus gave them confidence.

They knew he could heal the sick, and they saw anew the force of the Psalmist's words. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." He could and had raised the dead. They knew well that he, and he alone, was the resurrection and the life, and that though one be dead, yet he might still live. They saw him as infinitely good, and humane, and kind, and they knew that he would so remain, for being the likeness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, he would continue the same that day, and forever. What, if not confidence, and trust would such remembrances inspire? How could they sorrow, as do those without hope? Excited Jews might marvel when they looked upon these happy disciples, but not so much as a solicitous thought could they have.

"Why should the children of a king  
Go mourning all their days?"

In ancient time Jews sat down by the rivers of Babylon and wept. They hanged their harps on the willows when they remembered Zion, not so with the followers of Jesus, for they were happy and joyous always. When the sun of prosperity shone upon them, they gave to God the glory, and not only then, but they gloried in tribulations also, knowing well: and who could know it better? that tribulation worketh patience, and that experience, and experience hope.

How could they be timid? and what, but an ignorance of the peace that comes of believing could have induced the Jews to marvel, and the people to

wonder at their happy condition and estate. Let us be thankful to God, that we may be religious, but let us not mistake for Gospel, the opinions of men. If we consider God to be infinitely good, let us love him. If unchangeable, let us confide in him. If his ways are not our ways, but better, higher,—even as the heavens are higher than the earth,—let us obey his commands, and aim to be perfect in our sphere, even as he is perfect in his. If the path of the good grows brighter and brighter, even to the perfect day, let us walk no longer in darkness. If this earth is not our home, and we have here no continuing city, let us look with joy to that city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God. If the example of God's son, when imitated, has made the world better, let us speak well of it, and

“So let our lips and lives express  
The Holy Gospel we profess,  
So let our works and virtues shine,  
To prove the doctrine all divine.”

If the experience of the past shows, that to distrust the goodness of God is to make life gloomy, and death a terror, let us be scrupulously exact, that we say not a word, nor think a thought, if so be we go backward in our estimate of the Father's love. If we meet from time to time, for religious worship, the world will judge us when we go out, as they did Peter and John of old. They will take knowledge of us, and will think of our God and his Son, just as we manifest an opinion, and estimate of them. If we would have

others think well of us, and the Jesus we go to, we must evince things desirable and right. Boldness and freedom of speech and action were the qualities of the disciples. If we would have truth spread among men, we must personally act and live it; assuming that we faint not, because we have a better faith; because having been with Jesus, we know well in whom we trust. Let us see to it that we supplant not smiles with the worldling's frown, but better fortified and prepared for action than they; with feelings of love and kindness all aglow for human welfare, and a desire for a speedy triumph of truth and right, let us go forth "testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

## DISCOURSE XIV.

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### P A R A D I S E .

**JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, VERILY, I SAY UNTO THEE, TO DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE.—*Luke* xxiii. 43.**

Of all the words spoken by the Master, to a mortal, none have afforded more satisfaction or consolation than these. A transgressor of the civil law, was confined to a cross, and was soon to die. Till then, he had evaded the penalty, and felt comparatively safe ; now death with its unrelenting grasp, held him, and the doors of a questionable future, were opening before. His brother felon, more depraved at heart, and more wicked than he, was less moved, and he went to his doom like a stoic ; cold in sentiment, and indifferent to his fate ; but the other, — he to whom the words of our text were spoken, was more a man. He was less a sinner, and for him, even on earth, there remained a glimpse of the good condition that was to be his soon. He could not bear to die unreconciled thus. He knew that his way had thus far been dark and thorny, and at times, worse than death itself ; but he knew also,

that there was peace in believing, and that "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." And O, how well he knew that unrighteous hands were then putting to death a world's Redeemer. How all his passions must have been stirred within him, when he realized the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and that he was a sinner! He could no longer forbear. His better nature revolted. All his powers were in action, and then, even as golden clouds lie along the western horizon, when the storm is over, his spirit was calmed, and like the sun behind them, declining peacefully at night, even as that, when the sun of his earthly life was nearly set, the radiance of his other life shone in upon him. He bethought him of the peaceful home and heaven, to which he knew Jesus was to go, and as though he was already washed from his sins and ready to depart; having declared the justness of the penalty he was suffering, yet hoping for deliverance soon, turns to the Master, and says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And "Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise."

I suppose that no words which have ever fallen on human ears, were more welcome than these. None have touched finer chords. Many a time had great thoughts and words of consolation, fell from the Saviour's lips. Sometimes he said, the dead were only sleeping, and that he would go, and awake them out of their sleep. Sometimes he said, "Peace, be still,

and there was a great calm." Sometimes he said, "This sickness is not unto death," and at another, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Jesus said all these things, and many more, as soul-inspiring and as good, but the influence of things thus promised or done, would finally end. Lazarus might be sleeping that day, and the Master might have power to awake him, but, thought Mary and Martha, he will by and by sleep again, and we shall then be without a Jesus to call him back to us.

The sea ; angry and boisterous ; madly beating against a frail vessel, and sending it unwelcomely from wave to wave — the sea, troubled and troubling thus, might be made for a time to rest, but who should still it when maddened again ? A few days and it would be as before, disturbed, and to no entreaties would listen or repose. A particular sickness might not be unto death, but the very next one might. He had promised to be with his disciples to the end of the world or age, but what should they do after that ? The very fact of naming a time was a source of trouble and perplexity and doubt. All the things named ; nearly all the good promises made, or things proposed to be done, would end. But how grandly transcendent the promise made here ! How soothing and full of satisfaction the words, Verily, I say unto you, to-day shalt thou be with me in paradise. No more sin for you — no longer will you be troubled. In the grave, where your bones will moulder and your flesh be resolved back to dust ; there in the earth, will remain all that disturbs

you now. The corruptible will put on incorruption, and the mortal immortality; nor will you suffer nor die any more; you shall be with me in paradise to-day. And O think, in continuation of the thoughts that must have come wildering along; thrilling to extacy that already overjoyed and elated breast. Thought the happy penitent, "I am to remain there so long — never to remove or go out again.

"When I've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun;  
I'll have no less days to sing God's praise,  
Than when I first begun."

We have no further account of either. They at last died. Their lives went out on the air, and their spirits passed into the paradise of God. They are there now, and will remain there forever.

There is a difference of opinion in relation to our text and its proper deductions. Some have argued that the word *to-day* belongs to the first part of the verse, as though Jesus had said, "You ask me to remember you when I go into my kingdom. You need not wait till then. Verily I say unto you to-day, you will be with me in paradise. I am remembering you even *now*." Others think the passage is not genuine, and in some versions it is omitted. The burden of thought to me, however, is this. That the same day both would be delivered and happy. The context and corresponding thought warrant us in thinking, that the penitent was desirous of enjoying a better condition.

The word *Paradise* was one commonly used to signify a place of happiness and rest. Many are the instances where it is so used in Scripture, and such being the usage at the time our text was uttered, it would appear that any straining after other interpretation is not only unwarranted but unjust. Had the Master elaborated his thoughts, he would probably have said, "You need not trouble yourself now ; these cruel men will torture your flesh — you will soon die, but as soon, you will live, and all those joys you would have, shall be yours. To-day you will be in paradise with me."

I will next say something in regard to the other — the greater sinner. He who died the stoic ; the unbeliever ; the seeming despiser of the Nazarene. Where shall he go, and what will be the fate of him ? Some will say, "He went down to unutterable woe ; to everlasting unrest and despair. He went there that day, and remains there now. He walks," say they, "up and down, and along its terrible lengths, and writhes in acute pain. He suffers more than human heart has conceived, or lips have told, and will be troubled thus forever. When eternity's long ages have moved ; when age after age has been, he will still have only begun ; and in store for him will be longer agonies and fiercer pains. He died impenitent," say they, "and meets his reward. Naught but trouble, and agony, and despair, and darkness and chains after that, for him."

How our breath refuses to be breathed when we talk thus ! How the soul recoilingly moves back, and the heart refuses to consider ! A human being brought into

existence by the same God as the penitent. Permitted to live and sin. Permitted to possess a temperament which made him think less of truth and right ; less of the Master than the other, and because of his misfortune ; because unfortunate thus, he must so early begin an existence of such terrible grief. How better the good old gospel truth, than that of the creeds of men ! “ Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

But, says the objector, are both to be happy and in paradise with the Master that day ? For aught you or I should dare say to the contrary they were. No intimation is there of either's spirit going to any other God, than the one who gave it. Both were God's children—he loved each with a Father's love. One was troubled here more than the other. God knew why—I do not—but it is unreasonable to say he will be troubled forever.

When I think of the peace that always comes of believing, I remember the joy the penitent had, and the grand hopes that were his. Was not an anticipation of an immediate rest and heaven, enough to reward him for all the concessions he made ? How early his heaven begun ! Even as the martyrs, he looked in through the open door, and saw the white-vested elders with their crowns and their palms. His soul listened to the music, at that early time, and at last he went home in a cloud of resignation and glory. Was it not enough remuneration for all the tears he shed and every repentant sigh he uttered ?

And O the other — he who, because of a dim spiritual vision, *could* not see, and who, in consequence of a hardened nature, did not yield. He had no hopes. He saw an enraged multitude around them, eager for torture and death. He felt no outreachings after a new and better life. He remembered that soon his body would be food for worms, and in time cease to be. He hated Jesus. He had been educated to think, and he believed him to be a usurper of power, a blasphemer, a wretch. He looked upon it as a disgrace to be hanged with him. Jewish pride was in his heart. He said, “let me die as a felon, if I must — let me die with brother thieves ; any way, or any how—only let me not die with him you in derision call king of the Jews.”

He was a wicked man, whose life was one of sin, and he could not easily, — yes, friends, that is the word,—he could not easily yield, and he died, terribly thus. Was not his end of sufficient trouble to recompense for his neglect ? He lived a sinner, and he died one. For years he had all the ministrations of sin, following close at the heels of transgressions, but shall we say that a God of infinite wisdom and benevolence, would continue him in that condition, world without end ? Never. That God is not the God of love believed in by John, nor represented by the Master. I confess I am not able to tell you now, why God permitted one to die thus and the other not. He alone knows. That he had some end in view for the good of each, I must think. Eternity will declare to you and me, many things that are dark and inscrutable

now. Let us wait patiently for that. Think you that if such a fate was awaiting the poor impenitent as the church tells there was, the Master would not have besought him to repent? If an act so trivial would have reversed the whole of his eternity, would not some word have been spoken? Would not you have said something, and made at least one effort to save? Will you deliberately charge the Master with being less humane than yourself? You know the story — no entreaties, no word of advice! The other promised paradise — and for what? Simply believing. Eternity on a moment. Hang that up thus, who can. I believe that both were God's children, and that both went to him that day; and more — had the other replied, and said, "am I always to be a sinner as now? The Master would have replied, "No; for I came to finish sin and make an end of transgression. If you were to remain a sinner forever, my work would never be done."

"Am I never?" asks the penitent, "to go to paradise? Am I to be an outcast, a wanderer, and endlessly lost?" "No," would say the Master; "for there is to be but one fold and one shepherd. You will not be an outcast and lost, for all the Father gave me I shall keep and lose nothing." "And," says the sinner again, "am I to remain out of paradise long? am I to be dishonorable always, as now?" "No," would say the Master: "you will put on immortality soon. That which is sown is not the body that shall be. It is sown natural, but raised spiritual; sown in

weakness, but raised in power; sown in *dishonor*, but raised in *glory*. To-day you will be with me in paradise."

I cannot fail to arrive at conclusions like these. If the Scriptures be true, And as in Adam all die, even so will all in Christ be made alive, then saint and sinner goes to the paradise of God. I defend not the creeds of men now, and I know it. With Paul and the Master they take issue, not with me. I am willing to wait to know why a few temporal troubles come to some mortals and not to others; but to believe that one of God's children will forever be troubled, I cannot and I will not.

There are various good lessons to be learned from our text. Time will forbid me to elaborate my thoughts now. I can touch on but a few, and that must suffice. The first great practical lesson is: That virtue and transgression carry with them their own immediate reward. No truth in human history is better attested than this. The impenitent thief, and the penitent one also, were living monuments of the sentiment's truth. Both were unrighteous for a time, and the rewards of unrighteous deeds were theirs. Up to the hour they were hung to the cross, their lives and the results were similar, but how varied the close! One went down to his grave amid the darkness of a sinner's night, the other repentant, although but an hour enlightened and believing, yet his death was desirable to him, for he had all the consolations of one in sight of heaven, and just ready to pass into everlasting

glory. One could not see a step beyond the cross on which he hung, the other, with vision like the ensphered, looked over the entire width of the Jordan, and into the sweet fields of living green, reposing beyond.

And so is it with all of us. When doubting and sinning — when away from Christ, in thought, we are aliens and strangers, but when doing as he did — loving much, and practicing the right — bearing burdens for others, suffering for them, and always living for truth, and acting well, then come thoughts and consolations of a deliverance and rest, and home, and heaven.

The second lesson is this : To obtain aid from on high, or any source above ourselves, we have a work to do before the blessing will come. Grain will not grow without the planting. The soil may be generous, and so may be the rain, and the sun and the dew, but the seed must be sown first. God does his work next. Some people act in matters of religion, just as though they had a supreme respect for the Almighty, and as a matter of courtesy, waited for him to do his work first. They seem as though standing at a door through which dignitaries were soon to pass, and that it would ill become them to go in first. Courtesy is well, but when people apply the thing thus to God, and wait, as though they were waiting for him, it is no courtesy at all. They do not thus in matters of business, and religion asks for no more civilities than properly belongs to right anywhere else. Christ was no nearer those thieves when on the cross, than he had been every day and

hour before. He was always near, and waiting for them to go into his kingdom. The impenitent one might years before, have had as good an assurance as the penitent one got in the last hour of his life. We have only to ask, and information will be given. We may have a full assurance of hope and heaven. Doubt, and neglect to obtain information is our own fault and not the Master's. There are many people now, whom the world calls pious, who are as far back in Christian assurance and hope as that impenitent thief was, and many of them go down to their grave with but little more, if any hope of a happy resurrection for themselves and their race than he had for his. They inquire no more than he—they doubt as much, and are alike condemned.

Third. A true Christian faith and hope leads one to desire to be like and with Christ. The thief who repented, knew that if Christ had power to take him that day to paradise, the same power would, if but exercised, save his life, and disperse the crowd of tormentors; but he remembered better things than that. He preferred to go then, since he was to go to heaven. He had never been so near it before. The common instincts of his whole being was, "Give me an existence with Jesus. Give me a home in his heaven, and I ask for nothing more." And so has been inspired, and has said many a penitent since. The true and confiding Christian always talks and acts thus. He has learned how unreliable are the things of time and sense. He respects all things that God has made, and is thankful

for them, but he thinks less of them than he did once. The absence of them troubles him less than they used to ; he makes much of the little he has — thanks God for that — and finally says, “ Depart things of earth, I have no further need of you ; fall off bandages that bind me ; let me go home to Christ and heaven.”

The Christian learns to love and be like Christ. He knows by experience, the rewards of well-doing. He knows that to be with him and like him, is to be in the best possible condition, and when he prays for any particular one it is for that. How well prepared to live or to die, is he who all the time is thus able to think and feel and pray. These three are all the immediate practical lessons I can name. There are many more that will come to you if you will meditate on the text. I want to say a few words now, on two other points.

FIRST. The doctrine of an immediate passage from earth to heaven, is reasonable and right. That same day the parties went to heaven. No long slumbers in a grave or tomb for them—none in any for you or me. It is not true that the resurrection day has not come yet. If so be that the dead are not yet raised, then the tombs are peopled yet. The sea is a vast prison-house. Then Paul and John and all the old prophets are still in prison, and are either asleep or confined, and waiting for a release. Neither to me is true. If they are ever to be awake, they are so now. My whole being revolts at the thought that Paul has not yet received and put on that crown, which he knew was laid up

for him. He had kept the faith ; he is now, and for eighteen centuries nearly, has been in glory. To-day, said the Master, thou shalt be with me in paradise. *To-day*, whenever the day is that our friends die, they go there also, and by and by, when we put on immortality — when it is said among men that we have died — the sound of the funeral bell will not as soon announce our departure here, as will the songs of angels our arrival there. I suppose the last groan of the physical element on earth, is the very key-note from which angels strike up a symphony in heaven, and that the clouds which hang over the spirits that remain behind, are only shadows falling from the wings of seraphs, who have in charge the new spirit released from its prison.

SECOND AND FINALLY. Heaven is the home of not only the Saviour, but of all the Father gave into his hands. I expect, for the Bible so teaches me — I expect to see there in the realms of the blessed, many a one who died impenitent here. Many who were *first* here, will be *last* there, and the *last* shall be *first*. God will give each his station. Paradise is not alone for old martyrs, and Bible, Hebrew saints. They will be there, but the prodigal sons of God, who were here tempted and contended ; when they come home, there will be a robe for them, and a ring also. The poor heathen, now thought to be in danger of endless night, they will be there. The slave and his master—no master nor slave then. The miser, better, because rid of the gold that troubled him. No mourners will be there, because there will be no death. No sorrow, because tears will

be wiped from all eyes. No night — no need of the candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God shall be light about them. This — this is the acme of all Christian faith and hope, and with it I can repose. Give me this, and I will patiently wait all the days of my appointed time, till my change come. I will begin earnestly to be saint-like, and Christ-like, and loving and forbearing now, as I am finally to begin a career like it, to last forever ; and all along life's journey, from day to day, will the thought be —

“ Shall aught beguile us on the road,  
While we are walking back to God ?  
For strangers into life we come,  
And dying is but going home.

Welcome sweet hour of full discharge,  
That sets our longing souls at large,  
Unbinds our chains, breaks up our cell,  
And gives us with our God to dwell.

To dwell with God, to feel his love,  
Is the full heaven enjoyed above ;  
And the sweet expectation now,  
Is the young dawn of heaven below.”

## DISCOURSE XV.

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### CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

OUT OF MUCH AFFLICTION AND ANGUISH OF HEART, I WROTE  
UNTO YOU WITH MANY TEARS ; NOT THAT YE SHOULD BE  
GRIEVED, BUT THAT YE MIGHT KNOW THE LOVE WHICH I  
HAVE MORE ABUNDANTLY UNTO YOU.—2 *Corinthians* ii. 4.

Remarkably sublime and full to overflowing with a Christian's affection and love, are these words of the apostle. How melting and tender they are! How like those of a parent to a child it dearly loves! In the verse which precedes, he says, "Having confidence in you all, my joy is the joy of you all." How unlike is this, to what he would have written to a lot of mortals at any time before his conversion. He had an unsympathising heart then. I presume he never before conversion, if he did after it, wrote to his father or mother, or brother or sister, a letter containing half the genuine affection contained in this single verse, of a long and good epistle. At the time he wrote our text, he was a true Christian. The love of God had long before been shed abroad in his heart, and at the bare mention of Christ, or his church, or at the thought of

any band of co-workers, his whole soul aroused itself in its might, and like newly born sunshine just gilding the tops of the mountains, the radiant beauty of light from God's throne marched in splendor forth. I think much of Paul as a scholar, a man of learning, and an orator among the orators. He stood on an intellectual pedestal and towered far above all the men of his time, in the attainments named, but how these all retire and grow pale and indistinct, when we speak of him as the Christian. None of the sham and masquerade delicacy of fashion, or the chimeras of the world in him. At the risk of being considered weak and lacking masculinity, he uttered the things that his large and generous heart conceived. He says, "out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears." His afflictions, if such he might for the moment call them, was a result of persecution because he was a Christian. Let him surrender his religion, and with the multitude speak against it, and its author and his church, and so far as the world is concerned, he will be comfortably situated and well. But no, he had been of the world once, and acted as it acts. He knew that Christian sorrow and grief, even afflictions concentrated, so as to make anguish, was, of the two, better. He had written to his fellow Christians with many tears. They being less susceptible to the influence of Christian work and love than he, had not yet been able to know the depth of his sorrow. "I have written unto you," said he, "with many tears, not that you

ought to be made sad and be grieved, but when in sorrow, as well as when in joy, I refrain not to write unto you, for if I write just then, you will know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." It is something of a task for me now to do, as I must, which is to break away from a consideration of the immediate theme of my text and discourse. I would gladly, and if my own feelings were alone consulted, I should meditate on thoughts like these till the day ends. O how refreshing in a cold and selfish world like this, where, for the larger part of the time, most people are working hard for self; how refreshing to think of one so unlike it, as the apostle! I would do him and his name honor, and by reflection on the good that was in him, would while away all the hours thus, and be happy as a child is at play, or as tender lambs in their roaming, or birds among the trees; but I am not free to act thus, and will employ the time more formally, in drawing such lessons from the text as may aid you in thinking, so that when alone; in your homes, or in the shop, or in the field, you may get such reverie and benedictions as always come of a meditation of the life-work of the true and good.

Paul's body long ago went back and mingled with the dust. There is no Paul now, who, in person, with a beating heart and living lips, can talk to you. All the instruction from him you will be able to get, will come from a consideration of the things he did, and the words, while in the flesh, he uttered:

1st. A lesson of the text is, that religion, while it

ennobles its possessor, and in one sense, makes him strong ; the righteous being even as bold as a lion. While all this is true, it as well enables him to weep with those who weep, and be touched by another's infirmities. And this, Christian friends, is no mean condition, or really undesirable estate. I know very well, that to be pleasantly situated, as the world talks of the thing, and have no cause or opportunity to shed tears, is well. They say, well enough. But there is, after all, a thing more divine than that. A sympathizing tear is more a thing of heaven, than a cheap and accommodating laugh. Tears come from much deeper fountains in our nature than smiles come from. Heat lightning in summer never betokens a refreshing shower, no more does a few pleasant looks, and a profusion of acquiescences guarantee a supply of such help, as one needs and craves when in trouble. There are a plenty of fair-weather-friends in the world ; anybody and everybody can get enough of them, but they are like shadows, they follow only as long as the sun shines. When the sun gets behind a cloud, shadows not only get there also, but become clouds themselves. Remembrance of friends once ours, whom we loved, and whom we thought loved us, but who went away when troubles came ; thoughts of them at a time like the one named ; remembrance of such friends are clouds, and often they make sorrow deeper, and trouble greater, and the burden heavier to bear.

Laughing friends are good, but there are times when if they are true friends, they will cry as well. Now

religion is a thing of the affections and heart. Love is the fulfilling of the law. I have been entertained, as well as gratified and astonished, to ponder over the epistles of John, and a part of the things written by Paul, and discover so many things there concerning love and doing as one would be done by. If there was no other proof of the authenticity of the New Testament, and no other arguments or proof of inspiration than this one thing, I should be willing to take that alone as full recommendation. Never before, in any age, or for any consideration, has so much of real and substantial good sentiment and advice been given to the world. No one of all the lot.—take the veriest irreligionist or sinner who has ever lived, and when such tell the truth they say the golden rule is the rule of all rules, and most like truth and good.

I should be compelled to believe in the doctrine of total depravity, if I thought one could be so bad as to say in his own secret soul, that he hated to have good done for evil. Love and affection then, is a characteristic of the religion of the New Testament and 'Christ; and inasmuch as God in his providence has so constituted us that to weep is to render service, then the Christian may not hope nor wish for entire exemption. Jesus himself wept with Mary and Martha, and over Jerusalem, and so has many a follower of his wept, when their hearts have been touched as was his. Tears and sorrow with the afflicted, are not always unrighteous. Sometimes when I have been troubled in behalf of another, and when because they were not and could not

be comforted, tears came unbidden and dropped from my eyes, when, seeing their heart bleed, mine in sympathetic action has bled also, then, of all the times in my life, has the hour been hallowed; and thinking of the Saviour, how that he could and did weep, I have felt to thank God for his infirmities as well as my own, and that such good ministration came of sorrow.

I am speaking now of the sorrow of the Christian, and not that which is born of regrets or remorse. The good returns that come from Christian sorrow, are as much richer and better than those which come of guilt and remorse, as the light and heat of the noon-day sun is than the lightning bug's light, that is gone as soon as seen, and whose eclipsing, often, is all that makes us see it all.

2d. We learn from the text, that when we are troubled most, we may produce the opposite in our friends or those who need our help. When Paul was troubled to anguish and tears, he knew he could write to them, and yet not have them grieved. It is somewhat natural for us to like to refrain from doing anything, when we are afflicted. To sit down and let others alone, and be let alone ourself, is what we generally at times like, that sympathize with most. Now Paul knew better than that, and he availed himself of the power he had. Thought he, many a time while things went well, and the sun of prosperity was shining brightly, "have I written to and talked with my fellow Christians? They have enjoyed the friendship, and we both have been made better, but after all, that

was superficial. Now, I am persecuted for the truth's sake ; I am reviled and misjudged, and misrepresented by some of those who should do better and be my friends. My heart is heavy now, and darkness hangs over me, but this of all times is the one to do them a good service. I have from the first besought them to be patient in tribulation ; to not be entirely cast down in affliction ; but when grief was theirs, to look to God, and think of him, and their final deliverance and heaven. Now is the time to show them the working of faith, and Christian forbearance and love. I will in the midst of my tears, while they are yet dropping like the rain ; before the curtain is removed from my spirit, I will write to them out of the fulness of my being, and seeing the resignation, and the triumphing of my faith and trust, they will be made strong, and better able to bear a like tribulation. They will know the truth of my past declarations, and will realize the love I have and so abundantly entertain for them."

I can in my mind's eye see the dear old saint, and hear him as he talks and finally writes thus ; and then, looking a step distant, do we not see the band of Christians at Corinth, reading the thought sent to them ? And who with a heart capable of sympathizing or reflecting, fails to know that their love towards him was increased, and their confidence in the truth of his religion, from that moment greater, and that his kingdom that day made a splendid advance ?

When the heart is troubled it is like nicely prepared photographic paper, capable of taking good impressions.

There is a time after the parts of the camera are arranged, when the picture-taking work is done best. Everything pertaining to the operation, must be made right, and one thing at a proper distance from the other. So it is of these pictures we make on the mind of our fellow-beings. We must work at just the right time, and have all things in proper condition. Nothing but the strong light of the sun of a true affection—of a Christian philosophy and sympathy, and love, is strong enough to make the picture natural and distinct like life.

Photographers have, for many a year, tried to make pictures by artificial light ; some advertise now, in the city where I usually dwell, to take them by the light of the moon, and passable pictures are taken thus. They are passable only — so are pictures of the sense and heart, when taken by the lesser light of a worldly prosperity, and the common irradiation of a self-endish love. If one desires the best photograph of a friend, he waits till the strong sunshine of a full day is abroad ; and so the intelligent and thoughtful man or woman anywhere, believes and acts. They are not flattered with fair-weather friends, so as to think them, though for the time brilliant and tolerably well marked, the most valuable and enduring ; but they say, “ Let me have experience with the person when I am not prosperous — when the world is dealing harshly with me — when the time to properly try what the nature and strength of their soul’s power and love is.

Paul knew all about the thing I am talking of now.

He was wise in taking advantage of this great natural law of his and their, and our nature. He made an impression then that will be effaced never. This then is the second lesson of our text. Times of trouble, the ones to do best service to those we love, and whom we think love us. We have abundant opportunities to do this best work. God is constantly giving us a chance to thus labor. We have no friends who do not have trouble sometimes, We are not at any one time very long without being in just this condition ourselves, and therefore the often condition of each and all, is right for the sowing of seed, from which a noble harvest will come.

THIRD. The religion of Christ naturally leads us to render the best possible service. I suppose there is no reasonable question in regard to the fact, that when Paul gave the assurance of his continued regard for them, and the evidence that he then gave of his affection and love. There is no question but the thing he did was the best that lay within the range of his power to do. There were many things he might have done that would have given great satisfaction, and afforded a temporary relief. You know he was a man of large power of oratory, and a man of influential thought. Had he joined the rabble, and become traitor to his Master's cause, how exultant would have been the multitude, and how soon they would have done him honor. I suppose all Paul needed to do to be made king, or at any rate, the king's first adviser, was to promise to turn the interests of the church over to its

enemies hands. Great power sometimes gets entrusted to the head and heart of one man. There was a time in the history of America, when an earnest and unqualified request from the immortal Washington would have had great influence in the colony. A prayer from him to either of the sessions of Congress assembled in early times, would have been influential in the extreme. You know the story connected with the history of Benedict Arnold. Nobody seriously regrets that he met with summary punishment. Now Paul was a prominent man in his day, more so than Washington or Arnold was in theirs. He was possessed of more influence and power than either. He had greater interests in his hands, and a surrender on his part would have been more fatal to the interests of the race. Had present ease and a deliverance from a condition of things which made him sometimes sad, and his soul moved to tears,—had no better thought than a deliverance from this state been his, and he, unwilling to do anything for them, not savoring of temporality, than how much the losers would have been all his friends. As it was, for aught we know, they had enough to eat and to drink and to wear. He managed to get enough for himself. When his wants were not supplied from the treasury of his friends, then he labored with his hands and earned it. Had he, however, been king, and honored and renowned, he might for a time been better off in one sense, but new troubles would have come soon. The offices of trust and emolument would pretty soon be filled, when his

government was in full working order then would begin new perplexities and cares, for himself and all his friends in office and out. We who live now are well informed how things of the kind generally work. But, true to his good judgment and common sense,—I have always thought Paul highly favored as a common-sense man,—true to right, and the cause of his Master, and the real and best interests of his friends, he held fast to his integrity ; and, although by nature superior, and in advance of all his fellows in the fact of great intelligence and learning, and power ; notwithstanding all this, he waived the whole, and did for them, and thereby indirectly for himself, and in turn for all who live now, a better service ; the best possible good for him to render to us. He set an example for imitation then, which is a perfect pattern for imitation to this day, and this as I before stated was done naturally, just as Washington naturally worked for the interests of the people of America. I presume Arnold acted naturally also. Natural to him, but unnatural for any one else. There was a time in Paul's history when he would have done much different than he did when he wrote our text. That day when he went to persecute the church of the Most High, breathing out threatenings, and filled with anger and hatred and revenge, had he have shed tears that day on his way thither, it would have been because he anticipated defeat, but now his nature was changed, or his natural aspirations had new inclinations. Had he have gone there and been defeated by the superior force or power of a police, and

sent home, and had he on arrival have written to his associates, the aim of his epistle would not have been to make them aware of his undying devotion and love to them, but to inform them of his animosity and hatred ; of his determination to be unreconciled, and urging them to acts of persecution and violence till they had destroyed the whole Christian church. That would have been the work of Paul before conversion, but now his inclination was the antipode of this. He naturally and easily sought out and tried to do, the best possible or conceivable thing. There are many people who think they are religious as Paul thought he was at first. They know not what it is to be dead to sin. He knew better at last, and then nothing but good deeds came. He that does right from the love of right, needs no more doctrine of a future torment, as inducement for good action, than Paul needed or had. Things done naturally are always done easily ; at any rate they are then done, if ever, in the easiest possible way. I know it is a hard thing for us generally, to practice the golden rule. It is not easy for us to be reviled and revile not again ; to render good for evil. Well, all this is true, because we have not practiced the operation enough to have it come natural. There are people to whom it comes more natural than it does to others, and they are most in receipt of that good which it is possible for us all to obtain. There are many kinds of food we eat for which a taste must be acquired, else the thing is a medicine. So of many things done. Learning to skate on ice, or learning a trade, all

are education. Neither work is natural at first, but may be learned, and the ability to do it becomes a part of our nature then. This THIRD lesson is one of much practical suggestion.

Religion ; that of the Saviour ; naturally enables us to do the best service, or in other words, to do it easy, because in a natural manner. "We know that we have passed from death unto life," said John, "because we love the brethren." I do not think it was hard work for Paul or John to be true friends to the Master's cause, or to the best interests of their fellow men. Those tears Paul shed when he was writing that second letter to the church at Corinth, were not induced by thoughts of his inability to longer contend, and a prospect that he and they must surrender soon ; but they were tears of gratitude, rather, that he had it in his power to defend the right, and now, make them strong by these very same tears. "Not," says he, "that I would make you grieve, but that ye may know how abundant my love for you is." I cannot think they did grieve when they read his letter. Nor can I think they read it and no tears came to their eyes. Many a one must have been suffused, and holy influence from God come over their souls. But those tears no more than his were unrighteous. They were correspondencies, called into being by the like in him. Like always begets like. That operation was very like one on a line of telegraph. We go to one end, and sublimating our words, start them off on their journey through the inanimate wire. They arrive at the other end and are there materialized ; becoming words again,

and go to the one to whom they are sent, in the same form in which they were when they left us, so the good influence of the divine emotions which were spirit words from Paul to the church at Corinth. The tears he was shedding. The deep anguish that was his—these were the odor of his written thoughts, and when they were sent, the divine influence went also, and when their spirits were put in possession of it, just as it came from him, nothing but things of a kindred nature could be called out, and entertained by them. They wept as did he and were made strong, and loved him and appreciated his love more ardently than ever before. I have only one page more in which is written a FOURTH lesson. It is as long as any, and should be treated as fully, but I will not delay. Perhaps the statement alone ; for that is all I shall give, will be all you now need, or will require. It is this : While a true Christian faith does not prohibit tears of sympathy, and a common intermingling and communion of sorrow, it never craves it as machinery or aid. Paul never courted unease or unrest of mind. Like the Master, he would do all in his power to have the cup pass from him. He wrote not to make the dear fellow-Christians sad, but that they might know his love. Let us imitate the Master and Paul. Drink of the cup of affliction if need be, and do it with resignation. Be ever mindful of those who can be helped by the ministrations of our attention and love, and God will aid our and their cause, and finally take us all home to himself and to glory.

## DISCOURSE XVI.

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### MINISTRY OF TROUBLE.

**BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT ENDURETH TEMPTATION; FOR WHEN HE IS TRIED, HE SHALL RECEIVE THE CROWN OF LIFE, WHICH THE LORD HATH PROMISED TO THEM THAT LOVE HIM.—James i. 12.**

There is nothing more evident than that but few things, in this world, are unchanging. The laws by which matter is governed, appear to be fixed; but the matter itself is in a state of constant change. Old red sandstone, which constitutes a respectable per. cent. of the stone formations of the globe, is made up of disintegrated particles of older rock cemented together by a material once part and parcel of another thing. Even granite itself, which is supposed to be the oldest of all rocks, is composed of feldspar, and mica, and quartz,—once in separate pieces each. All the soil; the entire mass of sand, and gravel, and loam, that exists, is only ground rock. The presumption is, that at one time none existed. They are only the things left after time has dealt with them; as, by and by, only a little dust will be left after it has dealt with you

and me. The vegetable kingdom, is governed in the same manner. Every plant, small or great—a blade of grass, a rose bush, or an oak tree,—is made up of small materials—and of a variety, at that—so very small, that they either floated up, or were held in solution in the sap. Had we looked at it while passing, we should have thought it entirely free and clear. Every animal,—the smallest animalculæ that lives, with myriads of companions, in a single drop of water, or an elephant that trembles the ground of a forest,—is composed of many things. So of human beings, of fishes, and birds. Bones are made of lime and other earths. The blood is mainly water and iron. Every nerve and sinew; every atom of flesh; every hair, even, is composed of particles; and many kinds of material is there in each part of any and every animal system. The relative proportions of everything is in a condition of perpetual change. Now this is as true of our spiritual estate, as of our material one. The liability to amendment is constant, and a change, either advance or retrograde, is at any time in order. When an acorn is planted in the soil, it is an *acorn* only, and not an *oak tree*. It is possible, that an oak tree may come. That is all we can say of it at that time of its history. A human being, when just commencing its history, is less a being of which it is possible to be, than the acorn is of a fully developed oak. The career of a tree finally ends. There is a point where it declines, and after that the movement is retrograde,—continued till all is back, and mingled with parent soil; and then,

of course, not so much as a little acorn is there to tell that the tree existed.

I speak now of the individual first acorn, and the tree that came of it, and not the fruit the tree bore. It is not so with the divine in a human being. No decline ever comes to that. Eternity is not long enough to out-date its progress. The baby born, however comely and handsome, and worthily admired, when compared to the seraph he will one day be, is infinitely less than the acorn as compared to the tree.

Now, there are certain events or vicissitudes that must come to each before the different stages of development will be ; some small, and, while in progress, unobservable ; some great, and not only seen and heard, but known and felt.

That is seemingly small action which disintegrates the particles of one kind of stone, and then cements them together and makes another ; and so is that which changes sap into grass, or trees. But the action was mighty which cemented or fused together quartz, and feldspar, and mica, and made granite. So, in the great realm of spiritual or intellectual being and life ; very small and common action will make the baby grow up to be a well developed physical being ; but to as well develop the mind, and enlarge the divine part, is more momentous, even as the work of making granite is greater than making marble, or lime, or sand stone. Give the child room to play, and roam, and breathe in ; give it enough proper food, and rightly clothe it, take the same proportionate care of it you

would of a choice pet animal, and the probabilities are that a good, and large healthy body will be. Intellect of a common order will suggest all things needful for the work, so that a savage even does it well; but when you attempt to bring out the better element, and cultivate that, a new line of action is imperatively demanded. Intense heat makes the particles composing granite adhere to each other more firmly. The storms that beat against the oak makes it a strong tree. The powerful action of forces which act upon the intellect and spirit, make that, in like manner, of more account than the body which comes out into mature conditions, in one sense like a plant, of its own accord. I suppose the trials, the troubles, the disappointments and afflictions of our earthly life, do a great work for us, just as the elements do for the world of matter. Hence, there is a vast deal of truth in our text, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." We might say, good granite is that in which the component parts are best cemented together; and the best oak that where exposed to wind and storm, it for a century contended. There are many rocks of a granitic formation which are not good for nice work. The parts composing are inordinately mingled, and some too greatly predominate.

There are some trees, where the grain is too straight to give the right kind of resistance and strength. A tree growing in the middle of a thickly wooded lot is not as valuable for ship timber, as one exposed to sun and storm. The granite rock which was in the midst

of the fire is best, and is selected for the nicer work of a building or a monument to perpetuate the memory of human greatness. Blessed also is the man that endureth temptation. Peculiarly favored is he who is permitted to come in contact with uncomfortable and ill-conditions, and yet endures. I do not think that person is the best off who escapes temptation entirely. There are many people who when born are well-to-do in the world ; they have enough to eat and drink and wear ; places enough to go to, and means to thus travel ; who have a tolerably good disposition, and inclination to begin life with ; upright parents to care for them, and a general retinue of good teachers ; many are conditioned thus, who live a respectable life, and pass for saints, and when they die are said to have gone to heaven. It don't require much saintship to be respectable and good, and what the world considers pious, in conditions like that. Cesar should have his due, but God should have rendered to him, all that is his. Take the person who has riches, but no good teachers to instruct. Take the poor person who has neither. The poor boy, who, without money or friends, goes out and contends alone. Take the one, anywhere, who, coming in contact with temptations, endures trials, resists and conquers, and you have the successful one and the Christian.

I am remembering now, just as you are, that the other one does not sin near as often, and is in *that* view of the thing, more upright ; but we must remember the other part, which is, that the *latter* ; he who con-

tends *oftener*, has as often an opportunity, and many, if not all, at times, avail themselves of it, to lay up a new treasure, and a wreath, to by-and-by, encircle their spiritual brow. This trying to judge by appearances is entirely wrong. It is wrong to expect that all persons will be upright and good, in accordance with one pattern. We get egregiously cheated, when we permit ourselves to expect that. There are many kinds of leaves on the trees of a forest; a white oak leaf is different in shape, with one borne by a poplar or birch. Granite rock is entirely unlike marble; all are good. A blacksmith and a jeweller are artificers of a different trade. One can make a ship's anchor, and the other, the hair-spring of a watch, and a compensation balance; neither can do the work of the other, and so all through the domain of science. An apothecary can, a great deal more successfully compound drugs, than properly administer them, and an experienced village sexton can more appropriately bury a body than the doctor can, who attended the person while living. This analogy holds good in all departments of life. If each person is master of his own profession or trade, it is all we can ask; so of moral action and deeds. It is not every one who can be a BALLOU, or a WESLEY, or a CHANNING. That person greatly mistakes, who withholds the Christian name from another, for the simple reason that he disagrees with him in opinion, and does good, less in quantity and in another way. That parent mistakes, who is disappointed and ill at ease, because he discovers a diversity of inclination in his chil-

dren. I know a man who is sorely disappointed because his sons are not all of them preachers. Inclinations are to be studied, and the natural tendencies consulted. It is too much to expect that all the children of a family will be up to one standard of mechanical or literary attainment; and so of the morals. While we may be warranted in doing all in our power to make each and all, live near the line of truth and duty, we have no right to deal harshly with the unfortunately constituted one, if in so doing we make no allowance for the difference in constitution. When that is done, the offending one is wronged. While it remains a fact, that one who endures temptation and resists, is blessed, it is also a fact that he who encounters and falls is unfortunate. Let us deal tenderly with the erring. Love is the best conquerer. It costs more, perhaps, for a parent to *love* error's of action, out of a child's life, than it does, for the time being, to *whip* it out; but *cost* should never be put into one scale, and a *desecration* of the *spiritual element* of a human being in the other. The inhumanities of life do more than trouble bodies. A single blow struck on the flesh, is not a single, but many struck on the spirit. It is hard work, sometimes, to convince a sinning one, that an opposite course is best; but it is only the convinced one that is reformed. Butler said a good thing when he declared—

“ He that's convinced against his will,  
Is of the same opinion still.”

He that endures temptation, and resists because he remembers it is best for him, then and ever after to do so ; he who from a right earnest consciousness, dislikes to do wrong, and does it not, has the blessings named in our text ; “ When he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” How gratifying this assurance should be to all — the old and the young ! When tried, or troubled, if enduring — holding fast integrity then — as soon — have the crown of life. Not compelled to wait for another state of existence, but a present reward, an instant rejoicing and crown. I think if the church had, during the many ages now gone, preached this sentiment, that the millennium would have been in full operation to-day. The rewards of well doing have been stored in the future. Eternity, as most people look at it, is a great deal too far off to be considered a proper store-house for good, and I think the place of torment threatened is not very potent for this same reason. The nature of the torment has been set forth as bad enough surely, and it has been made long enough, but the masses have never been troubled greatly by it ; at any rate, education and advance in civilization, has greatly damaged the entire theory. Many a hundred per cent. of discount is there on it to-day. People are sure if they put their hand in the fire, that it will be quickly burned, and hence they are kept out of it, and any one who does not thus, is looked upon as foolish, or at least as unfortunate, and instantly has all the sympathy that friends can command. It is not quite

thus with teaching on moral questions. The fire of sin has been looked upon as not only well to be endured, but withal invigorating and pleasant ; avoided, not because of present burnings, but future ones. Desirable and would be indulged in, but for that. If there be no future torment, says my brother of an opposite faith, then foolish are all who do not have their fill of sin. That fill is very small in quantity, to one who, believing in *immediate* ill conditions, is dead to sin, and cannot live any longer therein. He who does right, receives early the crown of life. Yes, dear friends, you have a right to look for some of heaven every time you do a good deed. If you do not get as intense a consciousness, or are not as happy as you think it possible to be, then go and aid some one who needs your help, and depend upon it your good will be on the increase. Repeat the act to another ; so continue through the day. Let love to God and your fellow-men, permeate your acts all day, and at night, lying down to repose, give yourself up in a good and unwavering trust and confidence, to him whose eye never slumbers nor sleeps, and a crown of life and light will encircle your brow. Heaven will be about you, and whether you awaken in the morning to a new day and service below, or are carried by angels, on to the everlasting rest, and home, the rewards of well-doing will be continually yours.

We ought to be happy in our good condition and estate. This would, indeed, be a dark world, if we had to wait for eternity, before we could put on a crown of

life. People who preach that doctrine, call this world a vale of tears. They say there are perils and snares in every path. Every blue flower, they say, is a poisonous one. To such, every western cloud, that rises on a summer's day is dangerously overcharged with electricity. A tornado is betokened. Fair days in winter are weather-breeders ; in a word, success at any time or anywhere, is a precursor of a terrible defeat. They die while they live, and live only, and for the first time, when they die. If these things were true, life would indeed be a curse ; but all there is true in the scheme, is the fact of bad interpretation. The things named as bad, are exceptions. There are thousands of good ones, for each and every one that is bad. Be true to yourself, to your race, and to God, and things will be well enough.

I have in this discourse given a somewhat broad scope to my thoughts, and have refrained from limiting the word *temptation*. I am inclined to think the author would warrant us in the line of meditation our thoughts have followed to-day.

The words *affliction* and *tribulation* seem to me to convey his idea just as well as the word *temptation*. At all events, I think he would approve our deductions, for in this chapter he seems to be desirous of convincing the hearer that trouble generally, had a tendency to make them misjudge, and to blind the mind ; he says, " If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth liberally and upbraideth not," as much as though he had said, " when adversity comes and you are

disposed to sink under your trouble, then ask God for the power to see the end, as well as the past, and present, and seeing the good conclusion, you will rest and hope till it comes." He says even, "count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations." That is ; trouble is a night, in which you may see the stars of God's love. Adversity is a school where you may educate your spirits, and in another verse he says, " Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." I have said thus much in a line of general discourse, with three particular suggestions I will close.

FIRST. When we are in trouble ; when adversity is about us, it is no time to despair. Blessing is promised to the troubled, and to such, and at that time only. If we are to give up and become inactive, let us do it when things are in a condition to take a respectable care for themselves. If a friend is sick, we never think that to be the time for us to withhold sympathy and help. If one be drowning. If imminent danger is theirs, we bestir ourself and dispel the darkness threatened, and already coming on. The times of adversity are the ones when we should be strong. The crown of life is for the enduring—for them alone ; and blessed be God how many are wearing such to-day. There are many brows on which are resting star-bestud crowns. The poverty-stricken widow who ekes out her very life for those she loves better than she loves herself—the dear son or daughter, toiling

hard—early and late, for the younger children,—or for the parent on whom the hand of disease heavily lies—the lover of humanity, who suffers in any way or any where, all of such, wear a crown, more royal than any that rests on a monarch's brow. Let pomp and parade be the attendants of earthly glory and renown. The indwelling peace ; the calm sunshine of a righteous soul, is grander yet. The crown of life that John Rogers put on the day he died, was brighter than the fire that burned his body. The martyr to principle ; the Christian man or woman ; he or she of any age, who, being troubled, abides confiding and righteous still, has a right to hope for a good, the untroubled may never expect to have or know. “ Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life ;” this leads me to the second thought, which is, that when we are tried the most, and seem to be most alone, God is mindful of us, he is then near, and is holding in his very hand our crown. There are times in life when it would seem as though everything was so like the wheels of a nicely adjusted watch, which once in operation, will propel and take care of themselves. Times of general prosperity and success in life ; long continued fair weather periods those ; in which there is little discord and disturbing element ; at times like these, it would at first sight appear that God was taking care of other matters, and not interested in those which have to do with us. It is no hard thing to imagine that, but when the case is different ; when one is being troubled, and is nearly

overwhelmed, I can imagine him to be then, near, and looking directly at the troubled, and holding in his hand the crown, just ready to put it on the head of the mortal who is manfully contending with ill. There do come times in human life when we can almost see the darkness of death like natural clouds rise and drift away. Almost the very moment is sometimes known, when the head of the spirit is uncovered by God, and the crown let down, and afterwards set gracefully upon it. Sometimes all the hours of a day are dark, and gloomy and sad, hardly a ray of light, but towards evening ; when the material sun has nearly gone from sight, light from the throne has arisen, and all night long the soul of the day-troubled mortal has been radiant with light from their crown. Yes, friends, when you are troubled most, and are most earnestly and honorably contending with any ill, then God is near, hallowing the affliction, making it a benediction and a blessing, and will by and by let fall the crown ; next will come resignation and confidence and repose.

THIRD, and finally, the rewards of well-doing ; of enduring those ill conditions which come of contact with things earthly are immortal. A crown of life comes from contending well with things of death. There is no question, but a peaceful conscience ; one void of offence towards God and man ; a contented mind under ill ; a spirit patient in affliction, are things that money will not buy ; like wisdom, they are more to be desired than gold. These all come as remuneration ; yea, as the results of well-doing. They are very stars

in one's crown of life. These are immortal. There is a passage in which good things are promised to those who seek first the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof. Many a material good is promised to be added to the estate of such, but the promise made in our text is of a thing more valuable and enduring than they. A crown of life ; not simply endurance, being ; continuation of earthly things ; but life ; existence ; immortality, and, to the spirit itself, a friend and minister. This doctrine of our text makes life reasonable and enduring—a very blessing, for, says the trusting, yet contending spirit, “this line of action ; this death in which I am now involved, is but a counterpart to the other, I am to experience and enjoy, for in God I confide, and a crown of glory and life is in waiting for them that love him.” I have at times surveyed the written history of the apostle Paul, and tried to decide which of the marked periods of his eventful career filled him with rapture most. I know that when he first saw the light of a spiritual day, he must have been unspeakably happy. When the scales fell from his eyes, and he said, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do,” his whole soul must have been splendidly lighted up. When he was making that masterly speech on Mars Hill, addressing Festus, then he must have been indescribably happy. There were many times when he was favored, as is seldom favored a mortal, but among all the times, none appear to me more like the condition of the saints in glory, than that one when just ready to go hence, and be in the flesh no

more, he exclaimed, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all who love his appearing." That day was a happy one for Paul. That will be a happy one for either you or me, when like him, we are ready and waiting to go, or as was he, while troubled on every side, yet not distressed. Perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. God aid us, as he aided him, and now to his name, be glory in his church on earth and in heaven forever.

## DISCOURSE XVII.

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### RECIPROCALITY OF LOVE. 1

WE LOVE HIM, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.—1 *John* iv. 19.

The religion of Christ has two characteristics which distinguish it from all others. First, Love to God. Second, Love to man. Up to the day its founder began his ministry, anything but love to either had been the ruling sentiment in the church. I suppose that any one then, who should talk about loving God or his fellow-men, would have been considered as irreligious, as one would be now, who made it a business to hate either or both. People talked a great deal about fearing God, and were in perpetual labor, attempting to appease his imagined wrath. They respected a part of their fellow-men, and demanded the payment of respect to themselves from all the others. Probably they could not have well understood one who should talk about *loving* God, and indiscriminately loving their fellow-men. When love was talked about, doubtless they thought of affectional feelings, such as children have for parents, and parents for children ;

but what relation existed between God and man, to warrant anything of that kind, they could not tell, if at all know. They had seldom or never heard of God as being the Father of all; neither that all men were brethren; and when Christ and his disciples began to preach this new doctrine, they wondered, and in their pride and self-conceit hated to hear any sentiment of the kind. They thought God to be their especial Ruler and King, and they his favorite subjects. To tell them that he was not, and that the very ones they had for years been learning to despise, and think less holy than they were; to say that such were looked upon with favor, and that one day it would be well with them also, was to excite anger, and call down anathemas on the preacher's head.

To us who live at a time eighteen centuries removed, it seems an easy thing to preach as the apostles, and as Christ did. We think, sometimes, that our lot is hard; but in our worst conditions we are better off, and more comfortably situated, than they were in their very best. The early Christians talked in what, to the Pharisaic church then, was more an unknown tongue than the Hebrew language can be, or is to us, now. Hebrew is only a blind, or dead language, to people at large, to-day, in an intellectual point of view, because they have not studied it; but Christ's religion was dark and unintelligible to Jews, because they lacked the moral ability to know it. They knew not what it was to have the love of God warming up their hearts to devotion. They did not think that God *loved* them, or any one

else ; consequently they never said, as John did, " We love him, because he first loved us." Had they said anything about a reciprocal influence existing between them and their God, it would have been, " We respect Him because He respects us ; we are favorites of Him, because He is our favorite ; we are entitled to His attention, and He attends to us — sending fire, or pestilence, or famine to our enemies, just as we think it well to pray for ; He is an avenger of individual wrong ; we have only to pray that death may seize them, and that they may go quickly into the pit, and they die and go down to hades ; the region of darkness, undisturbed silence, and everlasting night." Not so, however, thought the enlightened, Christian John. He was talking about the great love of God when he pronounced our text. Let me read you a verse or two which come immediately before : " And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment : because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." Next to this comes the good recital made in our text, " We love him because he first loved us."

Sometimes I hesitate to quote a consecutive number of Scripture verses at one time, thinking the hearer has heard them many times, and has them so by heart that he knows full well the whole thing and its bearings ; but

I have less than ordinary hesitancy of this kind in quoting these verses ; for let us read or pronounce them a thousand times, they will still be new, and there will be the last time, as good if not better impressions and instructions than are obtained at first.

Take that first verse, " We have known and believed the love that God hath to us." What but a knowledge and consciousness of God's love could have made him and others believe in its existence? God might have been just towards them, but simple justice would never have warmed up their hearts so as to make them confide and love. Indeed, the reverse would have been the case, if justice be the one-sided thing it is sometimes represented to be. " He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." How many a time John must have been unspeakably happy, thus in the company of God. " Herein is our love made perfect." It would seem that love on earth never could be made perfect. It always appears to be unfinished, just as a tree or a plant is while growing. " There is no fear," he says, " in love." There friends, was the secret of John's composure. No fear in love. Perfect love is perfect goodness, and that is repose. All the loves we entertain for friends, or that friends entertain for us, is tinctured with varieties of fear ; not always that we shall injure them, or they injure us, but fears that the love will grow cold, or be bestowed on others, and we be left alone ; worse off, because of even the memories of our former condition. Fears that a lack of merit, on the part of either, may prove a poison to it, as a lack of

moisture, or a predominance of it, will dry up or mildew flowers. But none of this fear in God's love, or the love of His children towards Him. Only let a true confidence be obtained, and the love, thus perfect, will cast out fear, which hath torment.

"He that feareth is not made perfect in love." Just so long as any one is in doubt or distrust; just so long is the love he entertains imperfect. John said, "We love him because he first loved us." I do not think he meant to say, "We love him for the reason that he loved us first." As though he had have continued his remarks and said: "We should never have taken the preliminary steps, but as he has seen fit first, to deal properly and friendly with us, the least we can do is to deal friendly with him." That is the train of thought some imagine John to have had in mind. I think he rather meant to say, "God has first loved us. That love has entered our hearts, and taken possession of them, and now as a consequence, we cannot help loving him. He is so lovely in his nature, and has made us so much love each other, that we cannot help loving. We have passed from death unto life. That is the reason for our loving him. He has first loved us. This love we entertain, is not ours, it is only a reflection from him."

It not unfrequently happens that some reflecting object sends rays of light into our room, and they come like veritable sunshine, when the sun is in just the wrong quarter to send such directly from himself; and so it is of the everlasting sunlight of the Father's love.

Like the sun of the material heavens, it shines directly into our souls, and we have it there in its first glory, even as the reflecting object has the direct rays of the material sun. We shed light from our hearts, but it is reflected, and weaker than the original light, just as the light of the moon is weaker, because only a reflection of the sun's light. The better the reflecting medium the more brilliant the light when reflected, and so is that coming from a highly burnished Christian soul. There are times when the light of the moon is a fair substitute for that of the sun, and so spiritual light from John and Paul at times, appears to be a reflex of God's love, and seems to have a large per cent. of divinity about.

Now, let me draw a few particular conclusions from this text: **FIRST.** Instead of being totally depraved, and the rusty and non-reflecting beings that humanity are by nature, sometimes said to be, they are the fit receptacles for divine love, and do, or may reflect it as it cannot be, and never is reflected by any other part of the Almighty's works. There is no truth in the idea that none but angels are communed with by the Almighty. The most obscure being that God ever brought into existence, is capable of possessing a vast amount of love and emblazoning it to the world. The most showy things in existence are not often if ever, the most valuable ones. A hollyhock or a sun-flower is a showy thing, but a small garden pink out-glories *one*, and a modest daisy the *other*. The person of rank and education may have love to God and man fill-

ing his heart, and have it full to overflowing, but the heart may be a small one, and not capable of holding much. *Poor people, publicans and sinners* are as good, if not better receptacles of God's favor and love than any other class. The prodigal son and not the one who staid all the time obediently at home, received the most visible tokens of his father's love. I think every sinner who returns, and has his soul filled with the love of God, enjoys a Sabbath of rest as soon. Probably the very sins that John once committed, before he passed from death unto life, afterwards worked out for him an exceeding weight of glory.

Just let enough of the love of God get into a human heart to make the possessor conscious of it, and remembering that it is God's love, and *that he alone* is its *author*; God thus first loving; once put a knowledge of it into the heart, and nothing but the return of a similar thing can come. Let this condition be in the poorest or the richest of God's children, and he will love his fellow-men, and the perfect love will cast out all fear.

SECOND. If the love of God in the heart; or, in other words, if he, first loving, causes us to love in return, and do as he desires and commands, so when our love is in like manner directed or made to bear on our friends, a corresponding return will come. There is no law so entirely effectual and operative, as the law of kindness. To render good for evil is to deal death blows to sin. Every time a thing like that is done, it is like the operation of administering a dose of poison

to the body. There is no human body that can withstand the influence of Prussic acid, or strychnine. Sometimes as much of one of these as comes on a little confectionary, makes a person sick. No sin, nor system of sin, can withstand the influence of good. Direct the electricity of only one battery to a human body, and it writhes and tumbles, and if continued, dies; and in like manner, sins die, and are destroyed by the potent influence of affection and love. The cold wind made the man in the fable, wrap his cloak closely about him, but the warmth of the genial sun made him throw it off, and not only cloak but coat also. All winter long the winds blow, and passionate storms beat upon the shrubs and the trees. But never a bud or leaf comes forth. By-and-by the warm and invigorating rays of the sun and the mild and lovely showers of April visit them, and the soft dew feeds them all night; how can they longer forbear? The buds swell and the leaves come forth, and pretty soon the whole atmosphere is tinctured and made into aromatic benediction. The blossoms make the time a millennium, and a paradise itself is the place where they reside. There are correspondencies like this in human life: where violence, and the labors of passion have only hardened the heart, the milder influence of kindness has persuaded the erring one, and the life of sin was too uncomfortable to, from choice, live in. I think the whole philosophy of conversion lies in just this one fact. A proper quantity of true and right feeling; those of genuine love thrown into the sinner's heart, is sure to make him loving also.

A man may contend with wild beasts, and by tact and superior intellectual abilities, take advantage of, and conquer them, and amid the plaudits of an enthusiastic multitude, bow congratulations to a commending auditory. Such a one may have a strong and muscular body and an indomitable perseverance and will, but he may be taken aback, and himself managed by the gentle influence exerted on, and in his soul, by some feeble and helpless friend, who is too sick to help himself, and too near the portals of the grave to do anything that could be seen or known by a hurrying and bustling world. Had Paul only have fought with beasts at Ephesus, I imagine he never would have been heard of by us. We now, do not know the names of the men who did fight, but when he writes of his love for his brethren, and the cause of his Master ; when he and Silas are in the prison, and at midnight sing ; when he says, " If meat will cause my brother to offend, I will eat no meat, so long as the world standeth." When with love in his heart like that, he thus writes, he influences the heart next to his, and that the next, and that in turn others, till finally the influence reaches us, and we to-day talk of, and think about Paul and love him, because the same love that dwelt in him dwells also in us. We know much about him now, for the reason that he was a loving Christian, while we know nothing at all of the Ephesian beast fighters. It is very true, that if we follow God, and extend our love into the hearts of our fellow-men, good returns will come.

FOURTH. We have two doctrinal lessons taught us by our text. First. God loves us, before any act on our part is done. Second, being unchangeable in his nature; the same yesterday, to-day and forever; he will love us, and move us to love in return forever. He loved John and the people of his time, and those who lived before — even while they were dead in trespasses and sins. His nature is no different to-day. The fact that a child disobeys its parent, and by going contrary to commands, injures itself, never makes the sinning one less a child.

As a general thing, the sinning and wandering boy; the one who inexperienced, and cheated by the glitter and show of the world, goes out into life too early, and without health; disgraced, fallen and homeless wanders: such a one causes most solicitude in the parent's heart. I rarely ever see in the streets of Boston, a young man intoxicated and degraded; despised, and forsaken by even the common people, without thinking of his mother, and how her heart would bleed, could she but see her boy there and then. I never yet, during my sojourn of ten years amid the ills of metropolitan life, saw one so bad and far gone in sin, and degraded, as to make me think that his mother would not lift him up, and wash and bind up his wounds, and love him. No, for an unnatural mother would that be. I cannot be less courteous to God, and think he is less kind than that mother.

When I see a poor sinner bruised, and his spirit broken, and he wandering from place to place, like one

in darkness, mistaking his way ; seeking rest and finding none, I cannot fail to remember, that God is his father and mother also, and loves him, as he loves others, and has always loved them, even while dead in trespasses and sins. Yes, it is true, that the mother loves her boy before he is able to realize her love. Before he does anything to merit it, and so of all the children of God — his eye pities, and he looks compassionately on each. I can by effort, *imagine* a mother, in some particular instance, giving over her once dear boy to his own destruction. I can possibly picture to my mind such a woman, but let me tax my powers of imagination to the utmost, I cannot make myself see the Almighty doing the like. I say of the despairing and disheartened woman ; the unhappy mother — nature could not contend well, and now she sinks under her trouble and surrenders. I drop tears for humanity at a time like that, and feel my duty to be more imperative, and my burden heavier ; for I must now aid the mother as well as her son. I deplore the weakness of humanity then, but the time never comes when I feel called upon to render a like service to God. He is all-powerful, and will never fail nor be discouraged. He holds the destinies of all his children in his own hands, and will never pass them over to the care of another. I never think of him as being able to-day but unable to-morrow. He is unchangeable, and on that fact I rely.

FIFTH and FINALLY. We have it as a doctrine growing out of our text, that inasmuch as love begets love —

and this is just what God is—love, and not revenge and hate, will in the end universally prevail. It is a blessed thought, that God's nature is just what is. People may talk as they will, about our reason and common sense, calling them carnal and earthly, and never to be relied upon. They are emanations from the Almighty, and are just such as he thought it well to give us to judge of him by. The only qualification He has made is to caution us not to set too low an estimate on Him. We know something of the element of affection. We know it, however only in an imperfect manner for at last we see through a glass darkly, and are imperfect ourselves. Any imperfect medium makes things look imperfect. You know how a piece of blue or red glass makes all things look like the medium, or rather gives a tinge or hue to the whole. If one looks through red colored glass, things have a reddish look. If he looks at a town from the distance, he sees the white buildings to be white though tinted, and darker colored ones to be darker; and so it is when through the medium of the human affections we look up to God. We only see indistinctly and he charges us to remember that he is infinitely better than we get an impression he is. Never a caution, that we need take care, lest we see him to be too good. I have never read a caution like that, nor have you. His ways are higher than our ways, even as the heavens are higher than the earth. Now the human affections; the love the parent entertains for a child is emblematic;

it is a representative of God's love, and is emblematic only. We need never fear our medium will make him out better than he is. I have never feared that if my doctrine of God's impartial love should, after death, prove to be fallacious and untrue, and when I awake in a resurrected state find Him more a being of vengeance and wrath than in the flesh I thought him to be ; that for the simple reason of misjudging him thus, he will cast me off and torment me forever. If my good views of him are *too* good, he is not misrepresented save in charity, and I can risk the consequences of that. I will, in closing, go back to the last lesson named : Love will finally prevail. I am happy in the thought that this begetting element is so rife in the very nature of God. I should feel unhappy, and think a different theology true, if I did not know that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." The very broadest and most comprehensive language is used when the results of God's love is named. Christ is the Saviour of the world ; He is the Lamb of God which takes away its sin. "All Souls are mine," saith the Lord. Christ gave himself for all, to be testified in due time. Of all the Father gave him, he will lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day. There will be one fold and one shepherd. God will be all, and in all, blessed for evermore. These and the like, are the only thoughts that come into service, or are fit for use, when final results are spoken of. "We love God because he first loved us." We will continue to love him, because He will continue to love us. We will confide in Him

for He so permits us to do, and will say with the poet,

“ I love to think the time will come,  
When I shall be with Him at home,  
When I shall love as He loves me,  
And praise Him through eternity.”

## DISCOURSE XVIII.

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### END OF THE JOURNEY.

WHEN A FEW YEARS ARE COME, THEN I SHALL GO THE WAY,  
WHENCE I SHALL NOT RETURN.—*Job xvi. 22.*

Sometimes, just at evening, of a day late in the spring or early in the summer, a lone robin perches itself on one of the topmost twigs of a high and distant tree, and warbles a lonely but exquisitely sweet and plaintive song in the evening air. The notes are attractingly pathetic, and the whole performance is so tinged with a sort of refined, yet majestic melancholy that we instinctively sympathize, and ere we are aware, find ourselves in a plaintive mood of thought, and like the bird, muse on the very soul of truth and sincerity itself. An influence something akin to that, comes as we muse over and sympathize with the thought uttered in our text. That declaration of Job is very like the song of a robin at night. It is plaintive, and an exquisite beauty, made intense by a tinge of melancholy pervades it. "When a few years are come, then I shall go the way, whence I shall not return."

“ In only a few years,—not many at most,—each one of the lot growing shorter, and seeming to be less a year; when these are come, or have been, then I, all that I call myself, shall go the way whence I shall not return. I am not to remain, and year after year, and a repetition of these go by me like a caravan moving, while I am unmoving and fixed, but I shall move, and go the way to a sphere and condition, whence I shall not return. This is fact concerning me in a sense particular, and not alone of another. I shall not return. Never shall I be back in former conditions, but in a new, and another shall I continue.” I will not comment further, or say what were the probabilities of the faith and hope of Job. He was a strange man, and as a consequence, strange vicissitudes were part and parcel of his condition and lot. Take him all in all, and he seemed to have had a hope of success, and deliverance at last. He looked for a final triumph, and it came. His path was mostly a dark one, and little, save an intuitive light was his. Outside things were miserable comforters all. When he received any light, it seemed to be generated or emitted from the divine within him. However this may be, the thought he uttered is a good one upon which to meditate and muse, for we are in many respects like him. So, too, we may say of ourselves and each friend to the other, “ When a few years are come, then I shall go the way whence I shall not return.”

How much is contained in these few words. How simple they are; all but the last is a word of but one

syllable. They are as unostentatious and as unpretending as words can well be, and yet they tell a mighty story, and as completely, too, as was ever told by human lips. How heedlessly we read the passage, and how small a per cent. of the truth contained, gets entirely home and finds a resting place in our hearts. We talk generally, and act just as though many and not a few years would pass, before like autumn leaves, we and our friends would fall from the tree of life. We say of such an one, and another, their hold on life is feeble,—their days are numbered, and soon they will go to the place whence they will not return, but how seldom do we get a full-grown impression, that we too, are mortal and must soon join the

“Caravan which moves to that mysterious realm,  
Where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death.”

There is no one, who is in our opinion, not more mortal than we are, and whose years are not less in number. I speak now of the opinion of the race at large, and not of an individual member. It is said of Socrates, that when the time of his departure was nigh, he exclaimed, “The time has now come for me to be gone, I to my death, but you to live on, which is best, God alone knows,” and a few others; now and then one, is conscious of his nearness to death, but the conviction is not common.

It is related of a contemporary of Socrates, that fearing this condition, he employed one to be about with him, and when he became too much engrossed in the things of the world, he was to have spoken in his

ear these words, "Remember, O man, thou art mortal." It would not be best or well for us to be continually conscious of our mortality, else we might be misanthropic and dull. Probably the ability to shake off the remembrance is a blessing, else it would not exist, but the probabilities are in favor of the theory, that to be conscious that this earth is not our home, that here we have no continuing city, but are pilgrims and sojourners passing up and on to a heavenly. The power to be conscious, thus, and still philosophical, so that we are not disheartened, nor our aspirations enfeebled, is a better condition, and as near as we can judge, proper and best. Taking this ground and view of the matter, several things are presented for our consideration, a few of which, with as little formality as possible, I will name and briefly pass in review.

FIRST. As the text is true, of every individual member of the human family, and one may say it, as properly as another, each in particular, and all in general, it follows that it is a wise measure to do such things as are needed to be done at the right time, and early, or they may not be done at all. I suppose it is a fact, that you and I, and everybody, ought to keep the book of individual life so well posted up that at an hour's notice we could depart this life, and still have everything properly finished, and our work complete. What a large thought dwells here. How inadequate is a single sermon, or a whole volume, to tell half the story. What a large book that would be, in which was a faithful and true

record of a completely finished up and well ended life. Business matters so nearly adjusted that all can get their honest dues without question or dispute. At peace and on good terms with the world ; no enemy anywhere, but if one has before existed, he became a friend, and repented his hostility when he heard the tidings of the departure of that spirit, who always returned good for evil, and thus heaped coals of fire on the enemy's head. A good and noble example of affection and patience, and a Christian's confidence and truth, left to the family and friends. In a word, life complete to that hour, and all that was lacking absent, only because the time was short, and the years came so early for the spirit to go the way whence it could not return. What life complete like that was a short one ? or what one not radiant with a glory as real as that which clusters about the whitened head of him who experiences the full quota of years, and dies at the age of a complete four score ? Every country grave-yard, and every cemetery in our own or any land, contains the mortal remains of saints, young in years as well as old. The dear son or daughter, dying early, may have filled up a good measure of human life. The immediate friends, and God, and the angels, knew best. The outside world judge from appearances only. They often judge harshly, and always superficially. The best traits in the life and nature of us all, are known by those who are more immediately ours, and to whom we belong. This certainty of an early death, and this tendency to make

us unappreciated by the outside world, should incite us to vigilant action ; correct demeanor, and a general readiness for a call to go hence. If we would have our memory blessed, we must be just, and we must be righteous, if we would be had in everlasting remembrance, for it is only such, that in after days, and years, in good memory will still live. The staunch old Saxon derived word, *forget*, is one thing, but the Norman word, *remember*, is another. We do not readily forget one who does us an injury. We think, and at times, definitely of one who has wronged or defrauded us. That is thinking. But when we remember, that is not quite the same thing ; one is a passional and intermittant thing—fitful, like flashes of lightning ; but a remembrance is more continual, and constant, and genial, like warmth and light from the sun. The dictionaries tell us that a remembrance comes without effort, while to recollect, is not so free an act. I think the ease with which we remember a good friend, and the facility with which we turn to, and delight to think of them, and the good they did us, puts such things into the province of remembrance, and then on the other hand, the fact that in time asperities get softened down ; animosities become less formidable ; hatred gets neutralized, and time wears off the marked outline of anger and personal dislike, thus making it, by and by, a task to recollect the thing, makes the whole, in a sense, more than a non-forgetting. Lest I be accused of being metaphysical in discourse, I leave the point for you to elaborate as you may desire.

A second thought which comes to me, when I meditate on our text, is this : If Job, with only an intuitive light, and no example of Christ, or John, or Paul ; with no example of patience and triumph greater than himself, could be thus resigned, and ready to wait all his appointed time till his change came, how better are we prepared to await ours, and at last, dying as dies the righteous, our last end be like his. It is a great thing to live a noble life, but it is a greater one to be able to die a complete and noble death, It is an attainment to be able to contend well with the trials, and disappointments, and pains, and sorrows which come in an earthly life, and never surrender, but with an eye of faith on the prize ahead ; with the hope and prospects of a Christian's rewards and achievements, and spotless robe, and royal crown ; with these in view to go on conquering and to conquer, and from strength to strength. That is a grand return, and is well ; but how all retires, when compared with the last day or hour of life, when the summons of the angel has been delivered and pronounced audibly, to the ear of our soul. Having lived well, prepared to die better. Ready now to say, for the present, "good-by, and God bless you," to dear friends, who have loved us, and whom we have loved, but who cannot yet go with, and keep us company in the Father's mansions on high. Prepared to let them wipe the last tear from our eye, that will ever dwell upon it. Willing and anxious to be cut loose from houses and lands, and money, and all things that perish by the using, and

lay hold on those that are eternal, and fadeless ; and finally, the service ended, like an inflated balloon, when cut from its anchorage, rise majestically, high and higher, and moving sublimely aloft, away from things terrestrial, float into the atmosphere of heaven.

If Job, with only the light which was in him, could be calm, and with a marked tranquility, talk about leaving the earth and life, as he would of leaving his house, how more able should we be, to say with him and all the confiding, " When a few years are come, I shall go the way whence I shall not return.

Our transit from earth to heaven is not more mystical and less a reality than his ; it is really, only a cutting of the cord of life, and a floating off of the spirit to its proper condition and home ; and if Job, who lived thousands of years ago, could talk calmly and resignedly, all the more able should we be, to do the like. And let me tell you, when we fear and are alarmed on the bank of the river, fearing to plunge in, shrinking and falling back ; fond of our prison and our clay, we have not yet, hold of the hand of our Father, and Job goes into the kingdom before us.

One more thought suggested by the text, is this : As we each are so soon to go from these conditions and scenes, our troubles, and trials, and the things which now tempt and dishearten, and enfeeble us, will soon be done and among the things that were. What a good and glorious transformation that will be ! A change in our condition, for the better, the measure of which God alone can know. What consolation in the fact.

that we shall one day lay off these bodies that have from first to last been diseased and troubled by sinners and sin. All that makes the being a mortal — the flesh and blood, which never could enter the upper temple, or inherit the kingdom. All of that part, that is susceptible of physical pain, or decay, to be left in the grave, and never return, to be known, or to act the part of a mortal again. The great and good psalm of life is this very one. It is the sum of all the Christian's consolation, the burden of his song and hope. He says—

“ I would not live always, I ask not to stay,  
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er my way.”

For me to live, is Christ; but to die, is gain. I am ready to remain, if need be, but to go, when permitted.

“ O long-expected day begin!  
Dawn on these realms of woe, and sin.  
Feign would we leave this weary road,  
And sleep in death, to rest with God ”

I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that, because he liveth, I shall live also. I am a pilgrim, a stranger, a sojourner here; “ When a few years are gone, I shall go the way whence I shall not return.” There is no need that I now urge upon you the propriety of making this hope yours because, of all others, it is the true and good. It is the very foundation of our faith and hope. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. If when we are dead, we are not free from sin; if, through all the

years of eternity — the bare mention of which so bewilders us now — we must remain aliens to God, and separate from, or in misery with our dear friends where is our consolation and hope? If God doeth thus, and thus dealeth with his children, how in sorrow ought we to hang our harps on the willows, and sit down by the cold streams of despair and death.

Did I believe this, never more could I preach of a God of infinite goodness and undying love. Never again, at the bedside of the sick, or the dying, could I say words of consolation and cheer. Never more should I dare to say “you will soon be at rest, and peacefully recline on the bosom of an all wise and infinitely good Father and God.”

I have been to the chamber where the sorrowing dwelt. I have seen a poor mortal, tossing to and fro, through a long night, seeking rest but finding none. Bodily pain racking, like an inquisition the whole system. The medicine of the mortal physician no longer affording relief; and then how, as it were, but a few drops of spiritual balm, from the great physician of all souls; how, when that has been taken in by the spirit just departing, has a divine easement; yea an exquisite rapture, thrilled the whole being, and forgetting physical pains, nor thinking of mortal conditions more, as though already delivered, and at home in heaven, the enraptured one has been elevated, and glorified to an extent we may never know, till we have passed the portals of endless day. My high views of the Father, permit me thus to aid the sorrowing sin-

ner or saint ; and when either are gone, — when the last strand has been parted, and the recoil of the great cord of life so dethrones the living, — then, too, has the blessing been apparent and good. I know in whom I trust, therefore have I hope. I know God is infinitely good ; and I dare confide in him. I know he loveth all continually, and changeth never. No matter of moment is it to me, if some disbelieve, shall that make the grace of God of non-effect ? Why be moved, if some do tell me, that I and those I love, and who love me, are one day to be parted, to be never united, shall I heed the story, at once so against my convictions of what would be done by my Father above ? No, never let a condition like that, be mine or yours. Rather let us, like Job and the old prophets and saints, trust Him for His goodness, and his wonderful works to the children of men. Let us go on our way rejoicing, never despairing, because our earthly career must soon end ; never doubting but good will triumph, and that eternity will develope what time only anticipates and begins. I ask for no better faith than this ; and let me die early or late ; let my friends go now, or at a distant year, knowing well that these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, will work out for me and them, a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, I will go on trusting in the goodness of God, and never fearing but he will finish sin and make an end of transgression ; and, in his own good time, bring home to himself, and to glory a race now somewhat troubled, and dismembered ; all the time

remembering that his glory will be graciously revealed, and that all flesh will see it together.

Let the lessons of our text find a place in our intelligence and hearts, making us ready for what may come. Prepared to go hence : all things we leave in proper condition — our house set in order. Those we leave behind in possession of a noble life and an example worthy of following, be theirs. This is the highest point of excellence attainable in a pilgrimage here ; and no one who has lived a worthy life, and having completed it, at last died a noble death, can be said to have died too soon. I think that when we shall have put on immortality, and are rid of these excrescences of sin and wrong, and are seen by each other as God sees us now, that one of our chief entertainments will be that young people were saints as well as old ones, and many who were *last here* will be *first there*. Many a one who in their own opinion now, are saints, will be inferior to some whom the world call sinners. He who contends and resists most, is in advance. He who encounters little, has little to hope for, compared to one who comes out of deep tribulations, and by them enervated and made strong ; his better nature disciplined and ripened, and he all the more able to appreciate his good condition and estate.

I close now. God aid us all in looking beyond the letter ; that killeth the spirit ; the everlasting, the divine, the good, that is unseen now, but is eternal and fadeth not away.







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